

BREEFE METHODE OR

Teachinge all sortes of Christian people, how to serue God in a most perfect manner.

Written first in Spanishe, by a Religious man, named **Alphonso**

And reduced out of Latin into English in manner of a Dialogue for the easie vnderstanding and capacities of the simpler sort.

By **I. M.**

Chap. Ar. given by Mr. Palan

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The first part of this book is a dialogue between a Religious man and a Christian man, who is desirous to know how to serve God in a most perfect manner. The second part is a dialogue between the same Religious man and a Christian man, who is desirous to know how to serve God in a most perfect manner. The third part is a dialogue between the same Religious man and a Christian man, who is desirous to know how to serve God in a most perfect manner.

TO THE RIGHT MOOR

shipfull, & vertuous Catholike

Lady, the L^a. M. G.

Albeit mankinde, by the sting
of originall sinne, be dead, ye
wounded in body & soule, as
spoyle of immortalitye & all diuine
graces, brought into a wofull state of
all miseries, & naturallie inclyned to
doe euill, to the greater encrease of
his owne damnation: yet the grace &
mercy of God, hath not altogether a-
bandoned nor forsaken vs, but (with-
out any our good desert) hath left
vs in this exile & vale of woes, diuers
helpes, remedies, & meanes, where-
by we may attayne to his gracious fa-
uoure agayne, & (after this transitorie
lyfe) be aduanced to high glorie and
the eternall ioyes in heauen. These
meanes are his holy graces & vertues
by which we may be moued & made
able to serue him, & to conforme our
selues to his will in all things. Our
perfect sanctity & frendshipp with god
standeth in this pointe, that we be of

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same spirit with him, in euery thing we doe. And though he be a most gracious & bountifull Lorde, & exceedingly desirous of our eternall happy estate: And haith moreouer abundantly prouyded whatsoeuer may be necessary or conuenient for our welfare: yea & through the excesse of his diuine loue, haith leste nothing vndone that might helpe or doe vs good: yet haith he leste it in our owne choyce, & free libertie, whether we will accept and vse his graces, endeuour to gett perfect holines, & serue him as he desyreth for our good, or noe. Great ruine and destruction of all good, is made in oure soules by sinne, but it is in our owne power to repayre again this losse & calamitie, and to obtayne perfect holines, which we may doe, if (cooperating with goddes grace) we suffer our selues to be moued in all our actions onely by goddes holy spirit & will, as S. Paule teacheth his children to be.

To instruct this, many deuout booke
& Treatises haue bene written by lear-

& holy men in all ages, teaching what we ought to doe, discoursing at large of the natures of all vertues & vyces, & yelding sufficient matter for all sorts of holy Meditations touching the maiestie, goodnes, & other perfections of god: Touching heauen, hell, Judgment, death, sinne, vertue, and the rest: Perswading to good lyfe & terrifyinge from euill: All commodious woorkes & commendable trauels of good men. But amonge them all I neuer founde hitherto any comparable to a litle booke, deuulged by a religious man named *Alphonso*, in the Spanish tonge. In which goulden Treatise, he geueth vs an exacte & perfect way, how we may repayre againe the ruine & wofull state of our soules, by sinn: & by rightely seruinge God, attaine to the perfection of true holines & loue of him. This Author leaue the large & goddly discourses of vertues & vyces, their reasons, examples, perswasions, & all poynnts of Meditation, (as all beinge sufficientlye Taughte and handled, by others be-

and to be founde euery where,) and
breefely touching the ende for which
God created and placed vs on earthe,
what bounde & dutie we haue of ser-
uinge him: what abiection & miserie
our soules & bodies are brought vnto
by sinne: He sheweth a breece, yet a
most exacte way and manner, how by
the instrumentes and powers of oure
soule, namely our vaderstandinge and
free will, helped by godds grace, we
may purin practise and execution, to
his most holy honour, and our owne
greatest profite, whatsoeuer is taughte
& comeyned in other bookes, how we
may repayre our state againe, caste of
all wicked customes, expell all vicious
habitts, enryche & bewtify oure selues
with all vertues, make all our woorkes
most preceous, acceptable, & meri-
torious, in goddes sight, becom holy
chaunge our selues out of poore, ma-
ked, & abiect persons into most glo-
rious & diuine creatures: And finally
be vnted to God in most perfect man-
ner of frendshipp & loue. & flow oul
- This preceous Iewell, I sende you

as a token of my good affection, to-
wardes your spirituall welfare, which
I haue translated owt of latin, not yel-
ding woord for woord, but (culling
owt the principall poyntes & pithe of
euery Chapter) haue reduced it into
the forme of a Dyalogue, thereby ma-
kinge it more easie & playne, for the
capacities of the simpler sorte, whom
also I wish, may take commodity ther-
of, as I assure my selfe, your La. and
euery one may doe, that reade & di-
ligently practise, what is taught there-
in: without which practise, all know-
ledg is vnprofitable and vayne. It is
not written for vicious persons, suche
as delight to lyue & wallow in sinne,
without regarde of God or their owne
soules health, for these will take noe
benefite hereof, but the Author haith
prepared & directed this woorke, for
the great good of vertuous soules who
are resolued to serue God: & standing
in battell against the worlde, the flesh
& the deuill, haue a sincere desyre, to
liue well & woorke their owne salua-
tion. This good euery one that rea-

deſire it, may reape: that knowinge
thereby their owne poore & imperfect
ſtate, & behoulding how farr of they
are from that degree of perfection they
ſhould & might arrive vnto; They
may abate them ſelues in their owne
conceyte, carry an humble mynde be-
fore heauen & earthe, of their owne
imperfections & vnworthines, which
is a good ſtepp to further vertue: and
be moued now & then, to work ſome
particular acts after the manner hereof
which aſſuredly will be moſt pleaſant to
God, & moſt meritorious to their owne
ſoules aboue all other woorkes they
ſhall doe.

Now in your afflicted ſtate where-
in you are rolled too and froe daun-
gerouſly, by the enemies of goddsho-
ly church, for your conſtancy in the
catholick Faith: Alphonſo will teach
you how to ſtraight your ſhipp, with all
ſortes of vertues, more precious then
the Indian Treasures, that you may
come well laden to the port, when
your Lord ſhall ende your voyage.
How alſo to endue patiently, the ra-

ginge & furious stormes of Godds en-
emies: And how finally to keepe a
low sale, and an humble conceite of
your selues in all the good you doe, &
to refert all the honour & praysether
of vnto God the owner & gener of all
good giftes: For it is a most certaine
way to losse & shippwacke of all, to
impute any good to your selfe, or to
carry a high conceit of your owne well
dounge, ow or of godd & will becom to
Many veruously disposed soules, de-
light greatly in varietie & chaunge of
their spirituall Exercises, & embrace
with greate affection euery noveltye,
seeking to know many wayes to some
God: & neuer think that to be prefer-
red as the best, which is straunge and
ynknown to them, & that which they
thoroughly know and haue vsed, they
either loath or hile esteeme, such is the
inconstancie of our nature. But this
new-fangled mutabilitie, exceeding-
ly hindreth all spirituall good and the
progresse in all vertue: And without
compassion better it were diligently to
kepe & practise one (though it be a

meaner) then to be either negligente
in the best, or to be allwayes incon-
stantly sitting from one to another:
for so should a man neither goe for-
warde, nor grow perfect in any.

Be familiar therefore & stay your
selfe with Aphonso (good Madam)
for so shall you profit greatly. And
beware you be not content with the
verme you have already gotten. For
our Lord & God was made man, &
vouchsafed to dye, for to aduance vs
to a higher & perfect state of holines
in this lyfe: For this same ende also
he wold that Angells should mini-
ster vnto vs: And finally for the same
ende he hath given vs the vse of hea-
uen & earth with all his creatures in
them; Remember me I beseeche you
in your deuotions. And thus I com-
mitt you to God.

Your seruante

in our Lord

I. M.

congregation of the people of God

THE PREFACE OF

The Author Alphonsus

Saint *Amkrofo* saith, that ignorance of the order & manner how to worke, greatly troubleth the qualitie of our merit. Neither is it to be thought (as the same Author affirmeth) that we haue full knowledge of a thinge which we know we ought to doe, vnlesse we know withall the order of proceedinge in the same. Whereupon it is manifest, that it profiteth verie litle, if one know what is written for seruing God, & be ignorant in what manner and order it is to be done. And albeit arte & knowledge of euery good thinge, floweth from God the supremest artificer, & many be illuminated by his goodnes, & preuented with benedictions of delighte & sweetenes: yet for all that we must not omit to doe what is in vs, to seke (as we are bounde) his commaundementes & will, & other thinges which be necessary for doinge perfectly whatsoever is pleasing vnto him. For which

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purpose the breefe forme & Methode which here we sett downe, will be profitable, that we may know & worke those greate thinges, which the holy scriptures teach vs. The which to doe it is noe lesse needefull that some arte be sought owte, then for doinge any other thinge which we couett rightly to know or worke. To fynde owte this arte, the holye Doctoures haue spent much tyme, & haue lesse written at large in diuers volumes: of all which, we will gather a breefe conclusion or somme. But this short work being cheisly ordeyned for the Exercises of the soule: it will seme somtymes verye obscure to them which haue not bene exercysed in the knowledge & operations of the powers of their soule. Yet we shall shewe after a while in the prosecution of the book this Methode to be so farr from obscuritie, that it bringeth greate light to all other bookes of lyke argument. Neither lett any thinke it superfluous or vayne, that we geue Documentes whereby we may be helped to

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serue God; when as all the Scripture
winnesith such to be necessary. And
St. Paul saith; that we are helpers or
coadiutors of God; but he either hel-
peth not rightly; or not sufficiently;
that helpeth not as much as he can &
ought. Neither is it any other thing
in what we helpe God; then that we
moue our soule in all our workes; ac-
cording to the prescrip^t rule of this
present arte; as sacred diuinitie at large
declareth.

The Philosopher in his Metaphi-
sicks affirmeth; that mankinde liueth
by arte; in which place he seemeth by
this propertie to distinguish man from
vnrasonable creatures; for that all
these are moued onely by naturall in-
stinct without arte: but man is ruled
by arte or reason. Wherefore he may
be said to serue God as it weare onely
by naturall instinct; lyke to creatures
void of reason; that is moued to
serue him that way; by which he fee-
leth greatest consolation & sweetenes
without regarding by his understan-
ding or reason; whether there be a-

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ny other manner, wherby he may be able, to serue God more excellently. Moreover there is no cause, why any should alledge the vaction of the holy Ghost; to teach vs in all things, & therefore any art or Methode where by we may learne to serue God, is needeles: which sayinge is true; presupposinge that we our selues also be his coaduitors or helpers, endeuoringe to know & woorke, as we are taughte in the sacred scriptures, & in this arte which we are to geue. For the vaction of the holy ghost, teacheth not them that are vnwillinge to learne, nor them that are idle, or make resistance.

Furthermore lesse the sweete yoke of our Lorde seme heauye to any, let vs consider that it is not a thing to be merueled at, if some dayes are to be spent, for getting so high knowledge & wisdom, as is heare conceyued and taught in this arte. For if in learninge Grammer or Logick (artes farre inferior to this) one consume & spende 3 or 4 yeares, yea all his lyfe, if he

will be perfecte in any of them: how much better is our lyfe bestowed (yea if it be wholly spent therein) for the perfect learning of this arte most high & diuine of all other artes, which our supreamc mailler Iesus Christe, came to teach vs, with his so great toile & payne.

Moreover, he that beginneth to learne this arte, must consider, that it will happen to him, as it is wonte to happen to infantes, who hauinge perfect soules, yet want the vse of reason: and hauing in their bodyes handes & feete, yet can not goe or worke: but when they once begin to waxe and to moue their limmes, they goe, yet with great difficultie, & with fallinge slow & then: but growing elder, & vsinge daily Exercyle, they goe so freelye, that they can runne at their pleasures.

The same hapheth in these Exercises, whyles one desyreth e purelye to serue god after this Methode: For albeir our soules be perfect & intyre, yet so mightely are we bounde & oppressed & without strength to mooue

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mooue our selues in the perfecte way
manifested in the holy gospel, & de-
clared in this arte which we sett owte,
that at the firste, we can not walke or
goe at all, or if we be moued or at-
tempt this, it is with such difficultie,
that our goinge is well neare nothing.
Yet notwithstanding let vs manfullye
endeuour to doe what is here prescri-
bed so well as we can: for whiles wo
shall scarce dare, to hope to gett the
perfection taught vs, we shall by pae-
tyse yea so runne by these high pathes
that it may be said truly, our motions
to be rather the motions of an Angell
flying, then of a man walking on earth.
None oughte to pretende any ex-
cuse why he serueth not God after the
manner we haue here sett downe, co-
senting him self with the litterall ob-
seruation of som religious rule, or the
commandements of God, as suffi-
ciente to saluation. For as the Apostle
saith, Goddes will is that we be holy
and perfect. Seinge therefore riches
already gotten, do not suffice nor co-
tense the louers of the world, but all-

wayes they wishe & couet more, yea
often contrary to Goddes commaun-
dement. Neither in lyke māner thought
we to be contente with these spirituall
riches we haue alreadye, but laboure
to increase them dailye, & augmente
the rewarde we expecte, seinge God
doth vehemently desyre that we so do.

But if our appetite couer not this, for
the profit we may get thereby, at the
least it shoulde extende it selfe to de-
syre it, because we know it to be gods
will that we be magnified & enrych-
ed in all thinges, as the children of so
eternall & glorious a Father in heauen,
who admonisheth vs saying, *Be ye ho-
ly, because I your Lord god & Father
am holy.*

This booke may be intituled, *The
Way, Arte, or Methode, of fully seruing
God* which may be deuyled into three
partes. The first conteyneth certaine
vniuersall doctrynes, instructions, or
rules, whereby we may be directed in
all our actions. The seconde parte co-
teyneth certaine particuler Exerceses,
in which the seruant of God muste be

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exercysed, that he may repaire the ruine and corruption which sinne haith brought into his soule.

The Third part treateth of the loue of god, and those things which he commaundeth to be loued, in which loue consisteth the fulfillingge of the Law, and of all our good. And let him marke that shall reade this, how much labour & diligence he bestoweth, that desyreth to be conninge and furnished in some prophane arte, and how meete it is, that more diligence be vsed in this affayre.

These considerations therfore had & chesely relying vpon the assistance of our supreme maister Iesus Christ, our eternall God and Lorde, we will begin the foresaid arte & Method.

[illegible]

THE PILGRIM AND THE ERMIT.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

HOW THE PILGRIM

and the Ermit mett, & of
their conference.

IN *Mantua*, there once dwelled a Knight called *Probus*, who for his valour, wisdom, & other vertues, was much renowned in his countrye, & of all states very dearely beloued. He was of a most deuout & religious disposition, studying more to serue & please the omnipotent king of heauen, then the worlde or any earthly prince.

About the solemne feast of Easter, he woulde goe on pilgrimage, to visit *Ierusalem* & other deuoute places of the holy lande. And as he traueled through a deserte in *Sirsa*, he missed his way & was benighted: And wandering too & froe, he espyed at the laste a candle shyninge from the syde of a rock: thither he wente with all hast, & called of them within. By and by there came forth a fatherly

oulde man named *Alphonso*, & asked who he was that called so vntymelye at his Cell? I am a pilgrime for the holy lande said *Probus*, & goinge astray in this wildernes, I cipyed by good happ your candle, & am come to craue harbcur with you this night. All that come in godds name be welcome to me sayd *Alphonso*. I thanke you good Father said *Probus*.

When they were come within the Cell & sett downe, eche behelde o-ther verie earnestly. And *Probus* said, I meruell good Father, how you can endure to liue this austere lyfe in your course attyre offack cloath, with slender fayre in this yneaste hoale. I haue endured it said *Alphonso*, these many yeres I thanke God, and during this mortall lyfe, I desyre noe change. In what sorte I pray you saide *Probus*, haue you spent your lyfe in this solitary place, & what busines haue you had to kepe you here thus long? This manner of lyfe seemeth verie horrible to mannes nature. Mannes nature in- dedde my sonne said *Alphonso*, would

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not endure this, if it were not drawn on & fedd with greater comfurther an other way.

The onely busines wherein I bestow my self in this place, is continually to serue my Lord & God: which trade of lyfe, is to me so sweete, pleasant, & profitable, that it overcometh all the horroure, payne, & other difficulties, which the frailtie of my nature fyndeth. What exceeding ioyes also I haue by the hope of myne eternall reward with God for seruing him as I doe (if by his grace I perseuer to the ende) my tonge can not expresse.

It semeth said *Probus*, your seruing of God is more then ordinary: For I serue him also as I thinke, yet haue I not any such ioy therein as you speake of. My dyet is daintie, myne appa-rell ryche, my howse sumptuous, and yet with all these, I fynde small pleasure or ease in seruing God.

These temporall commodities saide *Alphonso*, I want voluntariely, because it best pleaseth my Lorde that I so doe, & that I be content with ne-

cessaries, without encombring my self with such superfluous thinges as you speake of, which if I had or desyred, woulde perhapps much hinder me in godds seruice, & are assuredly nedelesse, to my lyfe, health, or good estate: But the perfect seruice of God, which bringeth to man true comforth delight, & benefite in this lyfe, and a ioyfull hope of inestimable rewarde in heauen, consisteth not in the wante or hauing of these temporall commodities: For you also in your welth and abundance (if you knew the way) mighte perhapps serue God with as much pleasure & benefite, as I doe in it is pouertie wherein you see me liue. For our Saviour said: *Blessed be the poore in spirit, because theirs is the kingdome of heauen.* Which happy blessing & pouertie not onely they may enioy that wante all earthly treasures & commodities: But also the greatest princes in the worlde, in the middelt of their wealth & abundance.

If this be so said *Probus*, I beseeche you teach me the way, for I confesse

I know it not: & if I can learne this lesson, I think I haue greatauantage of you, that liue thus austerely in this desert. Perhaps noe greatauantage said *Alphonso*, for it is noe lesse gratefull & acceptable vnto god & noe lesse meritorious to our selues, to forsake all temporall commodities for his seruice, then to possesse & vse them to the same ende: yea the frailtie of man and the corruption of our natures considered, it is muche lesse penill to want them then to haue the. For the more we encomber & distract our small abilities abowt earthly thigs the lesse able are we to attende and wholly yelde our selues to heavenly. But I shall willingly teach you the best way of seruinge God that hitherto I haue knowne. Sett asyde therefore all other thoughtes; & marke well what I shall say. When you conceaue me not, aske bouldly what my meaning is: For it is lost tyme to vs both, if I proceede, & teach more then you vnderstande. Good Father said *Praxinos*, seing you geue me leaue, I will

sent vs into this world, not to enioy
 & rest in the transitory commodities
 & pleasures thereof: but that (taking
 of godds creatures so much as may
 suffice our necessities) we occupy &
 bestow our selues and all the reste we
 haue, in seruing & honoring our lord,
 who haith prepared for our rewarde,
 the blisse of heauen, wherein we shall
 possesse for euer, God him self, that
 is, an infinite good, and in him, all
 good thinges more abundantly then
 we can imagin. To honour & serue
 God therefore (my sonn) are we come
 into this world. All we doo besydes
 this is nothing els but losse laboure,
 vaine & hurtfull tryfling, dishonora-
 ble to the noble children of such a fa-
 ther as God is. No doubt father said
Probus, but we were created to serue
 God as you say: But what kynde of
 seruice dothe God requyre of man,
 & is by man of bounde & dutie to be
 performed.

THE SECOND INSTRUC-
tion, of two manners how to serue
god, & how Man is bounde vnto
to them.

CAP. 3.

There be two sortes of seruinge
god said *Alphonso*, & two waies
in lyke manner are we bounde
to serue him. The firste is in the ob-
seruinge of godds commaundementes,
which we are all bounde to kepe vn-
der paine of eternall damnation to hell
fyre. The second is more perfect, &
is this, that (forsakinge all earthlye
thinges, and withdrawinge our hartes
from the loue thereof) we caste oure
affection wholly vpon our heauenlye
Father which is an infinite goodnes, &
in all thinges laboure to be of the same
spirit & will with him, accordinge to
the example which our Sauoure the
naturall Sonn of God left vs whiles he
serued here on earth, not for any nede
of his owne, but to instruct vs how we

ought

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ought to serue our Lorde. This way Christ taught the yong man which had kept the commaundements when he said, *If thou wilt be perfect, geue all thou hast to the poore, & come & follow me.* How are Christians bounde to this manner of seruice said *Probus*?

Not vnder payne of eternall damnation said *Alphonso*, as in the first way, but by a Law of frendshipp with god of equity & gratitude, wherein all the children of God that woulde not be reckned base-minded, vngratefull, & foolish, should moste carefully keepe them selues, that they may appeare the worthy children of so gracious a Father. For to all it is geuen in commaundement, that we loue our Lord with all our soule, with all our hart, with all our minde, and with all our strength. And to all he said: *Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is.*

As he deserueth much blame that going to som place for dispatch of some weighthe & necessary affaires, & neglecting & leauing the thing he wene to doe, trisleth away his tyme in vyle

sportes & abie& thinges: so likewise is he much blame worthy, that being borne into this world to serue the high maiestie of God with all his powers & abilities, (which seruice is most due vnto God, & most profitable to the seruant) yet omitteth it because it is not commaunded him vnder paine of death, bestowing him self in the mean season, in a meaner and more abie&te kynde of seruice, mixed with much worldly vanitie, that most swiftly passeth away, & bringeth with it much euill. And albeit God haith left it in our free choice and curtesye, yet the bound of friendship, equitie & gratitude, requireth that we endeuoure to serue him (to whom all honour and seruice is most due) in the best manner we are able. The first way to serue God said *Probus*, is plaine & manifest to all Christians, but the other apperteyneth onely to you Eremites, to religious persons, and Clargie men.

As the first said *Alphonso*, is common to all Christians, & taught euery where: so there is no Christian but

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he may be taught, learn, & performe the seconde. I can hardly think so said *Probus*, for we may not all forsake the world & cast all our hartes vpon this perfect seruinge of God you speake of. No person said *Alphonso*, is made a Christian, before he first solemnly renounce the worlde, with all the pompes & vanities thereof, & yelde him self to the obedience & seruice of God. And therefore the profession, not onely of Ermits, religious persons & Priestes: but of all true Christians also, is to forsake the world, & serue their Lord with all they are & haue. For as I said God created man for this ende, & for all temporall & earthly things, no man doth rightly vse them or can haue them, but to his exceeding harme, vnlesse he turne them wholly to the seruice, & honoure of his Lorde, whose in truth they be & not mannes but for a litle tyme to vse as god hath ordeyned & commaunded, which seruice we ought to yeld to God, not onely in keping his generall commandements, but in the

perfectest manner, as Christ our Lord by his owne exawple haith taught vs all. And this seconde is that, which now I purpose to reach yon, that is, how ryche men, artificers, & all sorts of people, may serue their Lord and God most perfectlye. This will be most comfortable to vs of the world saide *Probus*, but it semeth a most difficult thing to be done.

THE THIRD INSTRUCTION

Of the wofull ruine & destruction made in mannes soule & body by sinne, by reason whereof, he syndeeth greate difficultys in seruinge God.

CAP. 4

YOU must know moreouer saide *Alphonso*, that if man had continued in the happy state wher-
in God created him at the first when he placed him in paradise, it had bene noe difficultie for him, to haue serued God in most perfect manner, &

to haue wrought any good. Forthē by
originall iustice, his sensuality & inferiour
powers were kept in most seemly or-
der & perfect obedience to his reaso &
will. And these againe were guyded
& assisted, by singular & abundante
graces, easily to obey & serue God &
woorke any good. But after once by
the euill vse of his free will, he sinned
& transgressed the commaundement
of his Lord: he with all his progeny
were spoyled of those gracious giftes
& cast out of that happy state & place
into the banishment of this miserable
worlde. His appetites, his will, and
whole soule, became so infirme & dis-
eased, that (loathing the infinite good
for which he was created, as a thinge
wherein now he tooke noe delight or
pleasant taste, & auerst from all good)
he is euer since inclyned to euill, and
can desyre or loue scarcely any other
thinges, but abiect, vicious, & hurt-
full. By reason of that greauous losse
& wofull chaunge, mankynde euer
since hath founde much difficultie in
the seruice of god, or doinge well.

Our concupiscence and inferiour powers, being now for want of originall iustice, lett loose and sett at liberty: neuer cease mightily to repugne and disobey, the reasonable partes of our soule: yea & to draw them to any thing they lyke, withowt regard what either reason or God commaundeth.

We haue still left vs said *Probus*, the powers of our reason and free will, and God geueth the assistance of his grace to all that call for it: by these the we may serue God in the best manner he requyret, notwithstandinge the corruption & repugnance of our inferiour powers. We may serue him so indeede said *Alphonso*, but not with such facilitie, promptnes, & alacritie, as we might haue done in the state of our innocency. For not onely the inclinations & motions of our sensualitye be verie disordered & contrary to oure reason, yea exceedinglye importune & vehemente to drawe vs from good to euill: but our reason also is much darkned, by that fall from originall iustice, & our will sore weak-

ned and wounded, yea and of them
selues quyte disabled either to resiste
the continuall assaults of oure sensu-
alitie & inferiour partes, or effectual-
ly to woorke any good. The grace of
god indcede enablerh vs to doe well,
but yet (as it is ordinarily bestowed
on men) it takethe not from them,
nor quite ouercometh, the repugnan-
cy & difficulties, which our corrupte
natures haue in doing well. Can we
not said *Probus* ouercom this difficul-
tie by any meanes? Yea in great part
said *Alphonso*, by singuler & extra-
ordinary graces geuen by God, & by
the good habits of vertues which we
may plant in our soules, by diligent
exercise of our superiour powers as I
shall tell you hereafter. But now re-
member that this great confusion and
perturbation in our soules, our auersio
from good, our inclination to euill,
with difficulty of woorking well, came
all from sinn: & yet the same bounde
of doing well & seruing God which
we had before this destruction, is not
taken away from vs. For though we

not doe our duties but with much difficultie, yet doe them we may by the assistance of godds grace, & by litle and litle, repayre againe the losse and wrack we haue gotten by sinn, in oure soule & appetites. How may this reparation be made said *Probus*, for I think the nearer we bring our soules & powers to their former state, the better shall we be disposed, and with more facilitie shall we be able to doe our duties in seruing God. Yea moreouer said *Alphonso*, we may profit so muche herein, that we may obteyne wel-neare the same facilitie to worke with great delight in this corruptible lyfe, which we should haue had in the state of innocency.

THE FOVRTH INSTRVC
*tion, by what powers of our soule,
we may repayre our ruine, & of
the way howe to vse our
vnderstanding and
will.*

CAP. 5

IN what manner said *Probus*, is this Reparation to be made? It can not be made otherwyse said *Alphonso*, but by the powers and abilities of our soule helped & assisted with the grace of God. Wherefore you muste vnderstand, that as man is made, and consisteth of a body & soule: so haith he infirmities in them both to woorke with, as the body haith feete to goe, handes to labour, tonge to speake, & the lyke. In the soule, there is the vnderstanding & will, with diuers other sensuall powers. The corporall instruments and their actions of themselves, are of small worth & litle profitable, as *S. Paul* said to *Timothy*. But the vnderstandinge and the will, may of their owne natures, be of excellent dignitie & profitt, as if we occupy them to know God & loue him, or to consider any good thing, and to desyre it, or to know what is euill, & to hate & shunne it: which operati-

on of these two powers, are greatly commodious, though the body rest all the while & do nothing. For by the Exercise of suche actions abowte any particuler vertue, we should produce & bring forth good habits in our soule & destroy the euill, which is a commendable thinge, though it be done but onely for the loue of vertue, as the heathen Philosophers did: much more when a Christian doth it hauing faith: but moste of all if such a man doe it with actuall intention, for the loue, honour, & seruice of God, as I shall declare anone.

These two instruments therefore, the vnderstanding & the will, & their operations, are the meanes (goddes grace euer concurring with vs) wherewith we may perfectly serue God and worke the reparation of our soule.

They be indeede said *Probus*, the cheifelt and mosse noble powers that man haith, and therefore fitteste for such an ende: but in what sort should we vse them rightly? Our sensuall appetite said *Alphonse*, naturally desy-

OF REPARATION.

reth the thing which it is inclined vnto, that is, what soeuer seemeth vnto it pleasant, delectable, and sweete for the present, to these naturally it is carried without further respecte: And in like sort it fleeth whatsoeuer seemeth harde, sharpe, and vnpleasante.

But our will is not moued in this sort, for before it desyre or shunn any thing, it consulteth with the vnderstanding, whether the thing be conueniente or not, and according as the vnderstanding, iudgeth, so the will freely desireth or refuseth it: So that the vnderstandinge, is as it were, a lighte and guyde to the will, shewing the truth of euery thing as it conceiueth it, & directinge the will how to work.

Wherefore aboue all other things we must be carefull, that our vnderstanding doe not erre or be deceiued in any thinge we goe abowt to desyre or shunne. For if it be blinded by ignorance, passion, or malice: it can neuer iudge rightly, nor consequently the action of the will euer be good.

But againe, though the vnderstan-

ding be without error & iudge truly what the thing is, or shew rightly what is to be done in any occasion: yet so meruelous is the power of mā's will, that it standeth in free libertie, to follow, & woork as the reason iudgeth, or to refuse. Onely it of all other powers and abilityes in man, haith the freedom & perfect libertie. It is subiect to none, & commaundeth all the rest: yea and in a meruelous sort the same power can predominate ouer it selfe, both freely commaund and enforce it selfe to obey: so that hereupon cometh all our euil, if either the vnderstanding erre, or (it iudging rightlye) the will by reason of her libertie, will not woork accordingly. In this sort therefore we must proceede with these two powers for the reparation of our soules.

And first for the vnderstāding, in euery thing which either by our naturall reason, or by the light of our faith, we know to be good, or disposing or furthering vs to vertue, & neuerthelesse we fynde great difficultie, horreur, &

auersion

auersion in our selues to doe or desire it as were for our good: we must presently vse the power of our vnderstanding, & with it, consider and apprehende, those same thinges (which seeme so sharpe & greuous to our natures) as thinges most preceous, and to God also most acceptable, & which may further vs also, to eternall life & ioyes: And after once we haue considered & knowne them to be suche, the will which had auersion and hor- rour of them before, may now be encouraged to loue, desyre, & embrace the m, & to worke them in effect.

When they are thus considered & knowne to be such said *Probus*: yet is the will free to choose, to doe them or not. You say truly said *Alphonso*, the will euer remaineth free, & haith perfect dominion & libertie to doe, or not to doe: but yet often it is terrified with the difficultie & sharpnes of the thing which is offered to it, & therupon ceaseth to worke, and so sunneth or omitteth the good that it might haue done. But if we endeour

by our vnderstanding, to prepare the way in manner abouesaid, it will take such courage vpon the knowledge of the excellencye of that woorke, that (be it neuer so painefull) it will loue and desyre it, and doe it also with as much facilitie and delighte welnere, as any other thinge which it coueteth naturally. Mark this pointe well my sonne, for I assure you that he which would worke & vse his vnderstanding in this manner, shoulde easely and in shorte tyme, come to great perfection of vertue, & woork with much delight & comforth. I think it well said *Probus*: But may I intreate you to deliuer me this by some example?

With good will said *Alphonso*: but it will fall more conuenientlye after I haue shewed you how also you muste vse your will, for this is the cheifest poynt of all. Then proceede I pray you said *Probus*.

THE Vſe of the will.

SVppofing ſaid *Alphonſo*, goddes holy grace euer to aſſiſt and concurr with our free will (for otherwyſe we were not able to thinke any good expediente for our ſaluation, muche leſſe to deſyre & woorke the ſame) you muſt know that it is in our owne power to deſyre or leaue to deſyre, any thing iudged good or euill by our vnderſtanding, & the ſame we may doe for this or that ende, and as often euery day as we will.

Nowe to wake the will deſyre to doe a good thinge which naturally it doth abhorre, by reaſon perhapps it is painefull, harde, or vnpleaſante: we muſt (as I ſaid before) conſider & apprehende the ſame thinge, as moſte preceous & gratefull to God, & commodious to our ſelues: & then incline our will (enforcing it after a ſorte) to deſyre & couet that thinge, as a ſick man deſyareth a bitter potion, becauſe he apprehendeth it as holeſome, the

which

which naturally he doth loth and abhor. In like manner also is produced the acte of refusing or not desiring the euill, which we naturally couet or are inclined vnto; that consideringe it to be vngratefull to God, euill & hurtfull to our selues, we incline our will, & as it were violently enforce it, not to desire that thing. For example, to couet to be despyled, contemned, or litle esteemed among men, is a thinge horrible, vnpleasant, & difficulte to our nature: And in like manner to forsake all sensuall delights & pleasures.

Now he that would haue an acte of desiring such contemptes & wantes of pleasures; must first consider and apprehend them, as most excellent & worthy thinges, most gratefull to God, & greatly meritorious to him selfe, & then compell as it were and enforce his will, to accept and desire them. In lyke sorte also to be honored, highly esteemed, & beloued of all men, to haue sensuall pleasures & other thinges delightfull, sweete, & pleasant to our nature: He that would

make

make an acte of refusinge and hatinge them, must consider and iudge them with his vnderstanding, as thinges of base valew, displeasante & vngratefull to God, & hurtfull to him self. And then vpon this true conceipt of these harmes in them, cease to desire them & make an act of hatred or contempt of them, as the sick person doth abhorre & refuse a most sweete potion or other meate pleasing his appetite, because he knoweth it to be hurtfull vnto him, though otherwyse he had a vehement naturall desire & inclinatio to the same.

In vsing our vnderstanding & will in this manner said *Probus*, shall we feele not repugnance in our sensualitie? Yes said *Alphonso* & that often verie greate, but this notwithstanding, our acte is a true desire or refusall of our will: As we behou'de in the sicke man, that will not eate the meate to which he haith a greate affection & appetite, because it is vnhol-some for him, and that same will of his not to eate it, is profitable vnto him,

though

though his inordinate appetite be not taken away. But by often woorking with the will in that sorte, the repugnance & all difficulties, will be lessened daily by the good habitts we get by our particuler actions. And albeit we seme litle to profitt or goe forward, & to fynde small pleasure in woorking thus, by reason of the contrary vicious habitts, inclinations, & customs in our soule, which make our actions seme weake & could: yet must we not cease to doe them, for by practise & exercise, we gett daile more strength & readines, and we goe forward with great meritt.

Is this all said *Probus* I am to learn about the vse of these two powers?

This which I haue toulde you said *Alphonso*, is the way to vse them: but one thinge more I muste tell you, which all that woulde perfectly & assuredly repayre their soules, must with greate diligence, carrie in minde and practise: for it is as it were the key of all our reparation. What is this I pray you said *Probus*? My sonne said *Al-*

so, it is that besides the continuall studie & care we ought to haue of exercisinge the will, in desyring the good thinges we should desire, & omitting the desire of euill thinges, thereby to destroy euill habitts in our soule, and plante good, that besides this I say, we be diligent by the vse of our will, to repress & resist the first thoughtes, motions, & appetites, which often assaile euen vertuous persons, and which may be consented vnto without mortall sinne. As for example, to be delighted that our deedes or woordes, be well esteemed, or to be sorowfull & displeased for iniuries, & auersion of other persons from vs, & such lyke: In all which, though it be not a mortall sinne, that we be occupied or consente to them, yet fewe knowe what great losse & harme they bringe to vs, for by them our soule is made dull & heauy towards good thinges it should doe. He therefore that desyreth to be lorde ouer his owne actions, & be able with facility to worke well: ought presently with his will, to resist these

first motiōs or suggestiōs: That where he was assayled with a motion of greif for such iniuries & auersion; or suche lyke: he presently oppose him self & resist such sorow & greif, with an actual desyre of iniuries, vexations, cōtempt, & contradiction. And contrari-wyse in the motions of honour, credit, fauour, & all other sweete, & delectable thinges, wherupon presently arryseth in vs a complacency & delight: We must be ready by & by to worke with our will an acte of not desyring or delighting in such thinges as naturally we are inclyned vnto and couett. For by so doinge, we shall not onely escape vanitie & sinn: but by often practise, & vse, obreyne excellent habitts, & expell the euill. Marke this well, & it may suffice for this poynt & instruction.

I perceiue said Probus, those good habitts woulde take away all or moste of our difficultie in workinge well: What way then may we gett them?

I shall teach you this also by & by saide *Alphonso*, but firste I muste tell

OF INTENTION.

you what intention & ende you must haue in the vse of your powers, & in all your actions; for without knowledge of this, all you can doe, will be to small purpose or commoditie.

I pray you lett me here it then said
Probus

THE FIFTH INSTRUCTION,

*What ende, scope, & intention,
the seruante of God shoulde
haue in all his actions.*

CAP. 6.

YOU muste know therefore said
Alphonso, That in all thinges
which we desyre or doe, the
ende, intention, and motiue, why we
doe it, maketh the acte good or euill
preccous in goddes sight & meritori-
ous, or vyle & sinfull: In so much as
a good woork done for an euill ende,
is euill, though otherwise of it owne
nature it were good.

Doth a good ende in like manner
said *Probus*, make an euill woorke

good?

Not so saide *Alphonso*, Foras a good woorke must be euery way void of euill, as wel, in it owne nature, as in the ende for which it is done: So an euill woorke is made euill, either for that it is euill of it own nature, or done for some euill ende. For which cause the Apostle said, that it was vnlawfull to doe euill, for a good purpose. Goe forwarde said *Probus* for I vnderstande this.

Euery woorke said *Alphonso*, that is good of it owne nature, or that is indifferent, that is, which being neither good nor euill of it selfe: may yet be made good by a good ende or intention, or euill by an euill ende. Euery such woorke I say, may be done or decayed for diuers good endes, as for the loue of vertue, or for the benefite of our selues or our neighbours, or for the imitation of our Sauour and his Saintes, or finallye for the loue of God, & thereby to serue, please, & honour him.

Now as one ende is better then another: So consequently, that woorke

is better, which is done for a better
ende, & that the best, which is done
for the best ende. Wherefore because
god is an infinite goodnes, that work
is the best which is wrought purely &
whollye for his sake, or to yelde him
honour or seruice, without respect of
any other ende. The seruant of god
then that desyreth in the best manner
to please & serue his Lord, must doe
all thinges both in body & soule, for
God, to please, serue, obey, & ho-
nour him thereby: That (forgetting
as it were the good & glory that may
come to our selues by doing any acte
of vertue, & mindfull onely of God
which desyreth our well doinge, and
delighteth in it, & is most worthy to
be serued & honored by vs in euery
thing) we be moued to woork one-
ly for pleasing & honoring him, and
for fulfilling his will: Like to a man,
that for recouering his owne healthe,
haith prepared a medicine, & before
he take it, perceauing his deare friend
to be fallen sick, and to haue greater
neede of the same: In this case (for-

geating as it were his owne infirmity, & the desire he had to that medicine, & mindefull onely of his frende) he reioyceth to forgoe it him selfe, & to bestow it for releeuinge of his frendes necessitie: So should we I say againe, serue God, & euer (forgeating our selues & all other things) desyre and worke onely, because it is godds will we doe it, & because his maiesty requirith it at our handes . For this ende & motiue we shoulde couet to loue god, desyre vertues, desyre & pray for pardon of our sinnes, for graces, for glory: For this ende we shoulde flee sinne, feare hell, abhorre damnation, & desyre or refuse whatsoeuer. It seemeth harde & vnpleasant at the first, but after a whyle, it will be easie and delightfull. And such as haue their wills enflamed with deuotion & the loue of god, at the first hearinge of this way, can worke thus without difficultie: and in short time come to exceeding great perfection .

But how said *Probus*, shall beginners which haue but coulde deuotion,

and

OF INTENTION.

and weake loue of God, com to gett
this motiue actually in all they doe?

They may gett it said *Alphonso* by
the vse of their vnderstandinge & will
in this sort. Lett them consider, ap-
prehend, & sett God as their cheifest
frende & most worthy Lorde on the
one syde, and them selues on the o-
ther. This done, when their will is
moued to couet any vertue, or doe a-
ny good woorke: Let them consider
for what ende they are moued, and
they shall finde it vsually, either for
seare of punishment, or for their own
benefite, or for the loue of vertue, or
desyre of heauenly blisse. None of
these motiues shoulde suffice or con-
tent the seruant of God, though they
be not euill: But seinge his will is so
free (goddes help euer presupposed)
that it may refuse any one ende, and
choose an other, as I tould you be-
fore: And seinge also he beleeueth
godds will to be more excellent and
worthy, & that it should moue him
rather then his owne: He must vio-
lently enforce him self to omitt & re-



use to desyre or will anythinge after his wonted māner & , bring his will to desyre the same thing for a better end & motiue, that is, to desyre to doe it, for fulfillingge the blessed will of God & pleasing him, and for that he (worthy of all seruice, obeyſance, & honour) would haue him to doe it.

This loc is the way to gett this diuine motiue in all our actions, which so incomparably excelleth the motiues of our owne naturall desyres, & all other motiues (how good & vertuous soeuer they be) as noe tong cā expresse. For the perfection of all our holines & charitie, consisteth in this poynte, that we conforme our selues in all thinges to godds will, & be of the same mynde with him. For which cause, and for that it is Goddes high pleasure & desyre, that vpon this motiue we serue him: we shoulde endeavour to haue it in all our workes both corporall & spiritual both greate and imall: yea in those also which we are naturally to woork according to gods ordinance, as to eate, sleepe, & c.

For as we can not leaue these vndone :
so doing them for the loue of God ,
they helpe vs much to the encrease of
our spirituall lyfe : And so the leaste
woorke that we doe in Godds sight,
as to eate, slepe, recreate, & the like :
shall be of more dignitie, then the
greateste woorke which he doth that
hath not the same ende : as to faste,
to watch, to geue almes, to afflict the
bodie, & such like, for the kingdom
& ioyes of heauen, or any other end
be it neuer so good.

Thus may we exceedingly enriche
ourselues euery day : thus may we be
made as it were diuine, when we are
moued in all our actions, onely by the
spirit & will of God. And therefore
when we are abowt to doe any thing,
we should not passe vnadvisedly frō on
thing to another, nor euer begin any
thing, without casting of our eies be-
fore vpon God : nor be contente and
satisfied with this neither, til we feele
our selues to will & desyre the worke
for pleasinge God, who exceedingly
ioyeth & delighteth in our well doing,

which once perceiued and sensiblye knowne, lett vs sett vpon the woork we are to doe, without thinkinge vpon any good of our owne. For it is fitt & due, that his omnipotent and blessed will that created all wills, haue such preeminence & dominion ouer all wills, that not onely they obey him in all he haith commaunded them: but moreouer, that they doe euery thinge they are to woork, for the fulfilling his holy will, without any further respect. At the beginning it will seme verry difficult & harde to worke vpon this motiue, & small deuotion or ioy will appeare in this Exerccyse: & the reason is, for that we worke not now, nor loue not, for any good of our owne, as we were accustomed to doe, & as it is naturall to vs: But working onely for the loue of God, we as it were remoue away from vs, the roote from which all ioye and delight, was vsually & naturally wont to spring, that is, we leaue all respect of our owne proper good & rest, & take for the rest & ende of all our labours,

an vnusall or straunge good, that is, the seruice, pleasure, glory, or loue of God: which being a supernaturall motiue & ende, and straunge to vs at the firste, noe meruell if this chaunge; bringe vnto vs great paine & trouble at the beginning: But by daily exercise, & frequent actions, we shall gett an habitt thereof & woorke readilye, with much delighte & comfort.

I beleue it well said *Probus*, for all beginnings of good things, are euer difficult & vnpleasant: and diligent vse & practise, make promptnes.

But I pray you Father, lett me ask you two questions, firste how shall I know and be assured, that it is godds holy will & desyre, that I woorke in this manner, and serue him vpon this motiue, and for this ende in all things?

This may you know said *Alphonso*, both by your naturall reason, and the light of our Catholick Faith. For God created vs all to serue him, and greatly desyreth, yea moste strictly chargeth vs to loue him, with all our hartes and abilities. And because

his dreadfull Maieſty, is worthy of the cheifeſt and beſt ſeruiſe & in the beſt manner alſo that his creatures can deuſe, to yelde him, which is, to be moued in our actions, and to doe all we doe, for his loue, will, and honour, as him ſelf doth in all his woorkes: It is manifeſt that his will & deſyre is, that we imitate him, working and ſeruing him in all thinges, for the ſame mouue and ende. For nothing can be more acceptable to his maieſtie, then that we conforme our ſelues to him, and doe all for his ſake. What is your other queſtion now ſaid *Alphonſo*.

Why then ſaid *Probus*, is not this ende and motiue (being the moſt perfect of all other) commaunded or taught vs in the holie Scriptures, but for the moſte parte, they threaten vs with puniſhment, or miute vs with rewards of heauē ? & c. The Son of god our Sauour Ieſus ſaid *Alphonſo*, as he condeſcended for our good, to take vpon him our infirmities, as to be hungry, weary, to feare, to be ſorrowfull, and the lyke: So woulde he

also haue his euāgelicall doctrine written in such woords, as our base condition and frailtie requyred: which for the most part is moued (now after the corruption of our natures by originall sinne) either by hope of good rewards or for feare of punishment. But withall we must consider, that as our redeemer tooke vpon him those infirmities of oure nature; with the cheefeste perfection and charitie that might be; in fulfilling the will of his Father by doinge and sufferinge all for his loue and glory: so he would haue his seruants to folow his example: And (that hearing godds threatens or promises) they be indeede woued with them, & doe their best to escape the one, and gett the other: but all this, not for the paines and punishmente threatned, or the rewardes promised: but because they procede by them, that it is godds will & desyre, they labour to escape paynes and damnation, in which state they can neuer serue God more, nor doe his will: and to obtaine the reward of heauen, where they shall be

with

with God for euer, and haue noe will, but to honour and praise him. So the sinner once brought to grace, feareth godds threatens, because his will is, that he feare them: He doth penance, because it is godds will he doe it: He doth good woorkes for heauen, because it is godds will he so doe: By reason of which ende & motiue, in his actions, they are of most high perfection and merit. And so the holy scriptures though they shew that outwardly, which is agreable to our infirmitie: yet with-all they conteyne inwardlye, their highest perfection in this poynre, as is manifest in the commaundement geuen, that we loue our Lorde with all our hartes and strength in all things, which is perfectly kept, when we desire godds will to be fulfilled. But because our natures are much inclined to euill, and by reason of our vicious habitts and euill customes, we waxe soone weary of well doinge: I must teach you how to extirpate such euill habitts out of your soule, and to engraft good: For vnlesse you learne

Mat. 12

this

this, all we haue said hitherto is to litle purpose, and you shall neuer worke with alacritie of mynde, nor procede with profit. Doe so I pray you said *Probus*, for in all your speach hitherto, I haue perceiued that good habits woulde take away either all, or the most part of difficulties, which are to be founde in seruing God this perfect way you haue taught me. They do so said *Alphonso*, and more-ouer, the whole reparation of our soule, consisteth in them, as the wrack & destruction of all oure good, is by the euill habitts.

THE SIXTE INSTRUCTION.

How to plante good habitts in our soule, & extirpate the euill,

CAP. 7

YOU must know therefore said *Alphonso*, that as these habitts be in our soules: so the actiōs whereby they are gottē & made, are wrought principally, by the powers or instru-

mentes

ments of the soule . And vnlesse we diligently vse & exercise these instruments, especially our vnderstanding & will, we shall neuer gett the habitts of any vertues. As for example, if a mā be impatient or tellye, & would haue this vice amended in him self, and obtaine the habitt of patience, this man how much soeuer he be wronged with iniurious woordes or deedes: howe much soeuer he desire the habitt of patience, yea how much soeuer he refrain from woordes or deedes of reuenge: yet shall he neuer produce or bringe forth in his soule, the habitt of patience, except he help him self by often mouinge his vnderstanding, to consider the great good of patience, and by stirring his will as the necessary instrument to bring forth this habitt by inclyning it (as I said before) to desyre to suffer iniuries and persecutions for the loue, pleasure, and glorie of his Lord, that exhorteth vs all to it, and hath suffered the lyke for vs.

Living among good and ciuill people and *Probus*, and Christians espe-

cially that haue the feare of God: we shall verye seldome, haue any suche occasions of impatience offered vs by iniurious words or deedes, & so shall we haue small exercise, & consequently, be long in getting the habitt of patience, or neuer gett it at all. In like sort also may we say, of the habitts of other vertues.

Not so said *Alphonso*, for where or with whom soeuer we liue, we may work, and exercise our selues at all tymes, to gett any vertuous habitt, & gett it in deede. How may this be said *Probus*.

At all tymes said *Alphonso*, you may produce it thus. For example, the habitt of patience. Caste at any tyme, your cogitation vpon som iniury that you much abhor, and think what you would doe if it were offered or done to you: Presently you shall perceiue, a greate repugnancy and horroure of that iniury aryle in your minde, by reason of the euill habitt of impatience in you. Forthwith therfore call to minde the great good that followeth, & how

is pleased in the patiēt suffering of such injuries: and then enforce your will to desyre them. And cease not to enforce your self to this though it seme but a constraint and compulsion, for there is euer some part voluntary therein. And if you practise often these actions, that which semed to be but a litle voluntary, will increase, and you shall come to suffer injuries and tribulation most willingly: & withall the habitt of patience will be planted in your soule. In lyke manner may you at any tyme plante and enriche your self with habitts of humilitie, of povertie, Temperance, Chastitie, and other vertues, euer consideringe the greate good that is in the exercyse of them, and compelling your will to desyre them vpon this motiue, because it is the desyre, will, and glorie of god that you haue them.

But yet you must vnderstand againe said *Alphonso*, that by this forethought and acceptance or desyre of injuries, which indeede are not done vs; this habitt of patience is not so quickly nor

so well gotten, as it is when som iniurie or disgrace is actually done, and this before others, if then you compell your will to accepte it: Because the actions of our will accepting such present iniuries, are more vehement, & more subdue the soule, then thoe which are of accepting an iniurie offered onely by our thought, & may happen, but doth not. And a few vehement actions, worke more strongly and effectually to the producing of an habitt, then many which are remissive and weake.

This is the way, to roote out euill habitts, and to plant good. For working of which effect, it is moreover greatly profitable, to keepe alwaies a verie firme will and purpose, in the desyre and loue of good, and in the hatred of euill, to which ende serue greatly the high considerations, and weightie reasons which many bookes yelde, why good thinges and vertues are to be loued, and vice to be hated.

Now hereby you may perceiue how the mightiest Princes of the worlde,

may

may enriche them selues with the habits of Patience, of Pouertie, Humilitie, Temperance, & of all other vertues: and bewtisy their Soules in godds sight, noe lesse then a religious person, if they be willing and diligent to doe as I haue tould you.

I perceiue it well said *Prabus*, but after we perceiue our selues to haue gotten these good habits, may we not assure our selues to be in good state and holy? *Albeit* said *Alphonso*, a man haue gotten excellent habits of vertues, yet can he not be sure that he haith gotten the grace of god, without which, a man can be in noe good state with him, or in truth holyc.

Gods grace is geuen infalliblye vnto them that haue all which I haue tould you already, and which foloweth after, but naturally we can not know in this lyfe, whether we haue these things as godds will is we should, and consequently we can not be certaine, that we haue his fauour and grace. But a cheife signe that we haue it is, when in the same manner we behaue oure

selues

selues towardes those vertues where -
 of we haue gotten habitts, as we doe
 towards the vertues of other men, that
 is, if our harts be not extolled or any
 whit prowde for them, but praise &
 thanke God, whose is euey thinge
 that good is: And ioy as much in o-
 ther menns vertues as in oure owne,
 because godds honour and glory, are
 equally manifested in them both.

But my sonn said *Alphonso*, I for-
 geat my self, it is good tyme nowe,
 you rest a litle, and make collation.

By this which I haue hitherto said,
 you may knowe in some parte, firste,
 how God created vs all to serue him,
 & to vse all temporall thinges to his
 honour, and for releefe of our neces-
 sities.

Secondly, how there be two man-
 ners of seruing God, and that we are
 all bounde to serue him in the perfec-
 test sorte.

Thirdly how by sinn, we are fallē
 from godds fauour, into a miserable
 state both of body & soule, the bound
 of seruing God still remaininge.

Fourthly how we may repaire again this calamitie and destruction in our soule, by the powers thereof, working with godds grace: & of the vse of our vnderstanding and will, to the same ende.

5 Fifthly to what ende you are to direct all your actions, thoughts, & desires, and how to doe it.

6 Sixthly, what way to extirpate euill and vicious habitts, which cause much harme in our soule, and how to plant the habitts of vertues.

After we haue made collation, I shall instructe you, how to exercyse your self in a few principall thinges, which are necessary for the reparation of your soule, before you can be rightly disposed, to loue and serue God, in such manner as he requireth,

THE SECOND PARTE.

THE SECOND PARTE, CON-
 teyning certayne spirituall Exercyses,
 whereby the soule is adorned, ben-
 efitied, and rightlie disposed to
 the perfect actes of louing
 & seruinge God.

THE first Exercyse. how the ser-
 uant of God shoulde purge his
 soule from all sinne.

After they had refreshed them
 selues with breade and water,
 which was the Ermits vsuall fair:
 he begann & saide. My sonn, the
 firste thinge and Exercyse, wherein a
 man muste occupy him selfe, to gett
 a fitte disposition, to loue and serue
 God, is to exirpate or roote owte of
 his soule, all euill, that is, the salthe
 of sinne: that when he would do any
 seruice to his lord, there be nothinge
 that may offend the eyes of so highe a
 Maiestie. This done, he muste a-

dorne and bewtify his soule with good habitts and vertues, whereby he may appeare gratefull & acceptable to him in his seruice. Of these two thinges, I will therefore now speake, and first how to roote owt and destroy sinn.

You must know then, that sinne is the most vyle and detestable euill that can be denyed, & bringethe to any reasonable creature that commit- teth it, vnspeakable harmes and mis- cheues. For by sinn, we looe God, who is an infinite goodnes. By it we contemne, dishonour, and injury, our louinge Lorde, in the fowlest manner that may be. By it, we frustrate in oure selues, the effecte and frute, of Christs painfull lyfe, and moste bitter passion, and conculcate or treade vnder foote, his preceous blood. By it we defyle and make moste lothsom & abominable our owne soules, washed and sanctified with the blood of oure Saviour, and chosen to be the sacred temples of Godds Maiesty. By it we pollute our harts, the Altars & Taber- nacles of the holy Ghoste, where he

delighteth to dwell. By it we loose godds fauour, and all his graces, the eternall ioyes of his kingdom, with all our right and tytle thereunto. By it onely we are made the boundslauers of the deuill, the felowes and companions of all wicked men both aliue & deade, & of the damned spirits in hell. By it, we are made the reprochfull enemies of God, the moste abiect, contemptible, and dishonorable of all his creatures. And finally by it we purchase assuredlye to our selues, endles damnation, eternall woes, and the horrible tormentes of hell fyre.

All which euills and miseries, are iustly dew to him, that by sinne committeth high treason againste his supream Lorde, who vouchsafed to dye for him.

Now the sorowes and teares of all goddes creatures are not sufficient to destroy or take away one sinne: much lesse the penance & teares of one man that hath committed the same.

But the mercy and clemency of oure Lord is so great, that he will not haue

vs to dispaire: And desirous of our weale, hath provided vs a remedie, & is content to pardon & forgeue our sinns, as sone as we for our parts, haue hartie sorow & contrition for the same: What besides is needefull or requisite, he supplieth it of his owne, & restor-eth vs againe to his grace & fauour. It is meete therefore that we lamente & sorow for our sinnes, consideringe we haue done so many euills by them both against God & our selues.

How shoulde we doe this as becometh vs said *Probus*?

The way is this said *Alphonso*. With your vnderstandinge present to your selues, the euills which come of sinne as before: & then compell your will (principally for the offence & dishonour of God, and because it is his will that you sorowe for them) to lament, and to desyre that you had not committed them, nor injured godds maiesty: which acte of your will, you muste often labour to produce; now in generall for all your sinnes: now for one particular sinn, now for an o-

ther

ther, & this with the greatestte ende-
uour you can, to haue hartie griefe and
contrition, notwithstanding you feele
your self sometimes voyde of sensible
sorowe or paine, for this is in godds
hande and not in your owne, to haue
at your pleasure, but doubtlesse he will
bestow it also on you, if you endeuour
to gett it as you may.

I vnderstand all this said *Probus*.

Then will I passe said *Alphonso*, to
the second thinge, which I tould you
was requisite, for the expellinge of our
corruption & euill habits.

What is that said *Probus*?

THE SECONDE EXERCYSE

*necessarie for them that would
serue God, which is the hatred
of our selues.*

IT is the hatred of our self said *Al-
phonso*: And this Exercyse amonge
all other, is of greatestt weight and
importance for them that desyre per-
fectly to loue God and to serue him:
For from self loue, springe innumera-

ble euills, by which are engendered
vicious habitts: And this self loue sea-
sing at the entrance of that holy ha-
tred (which the holy scriptures much
exhort vs vnto) all sinne will be destroy-
ed in vs, with all other wicked habitts.

How may we com to this holy ha-
tred of our selues said *Probus*?

Firste said *Alphonso*, of all thinges
which may bringe vs delectation and
pleasure, as meate, sleepe, recreatiō,
reste, apparell, and the lyke, we must
take or desyre nomore, then that we
can not cmitt or leaue vntaken with-
owt offence of god, that is, onely ne-
cessaries: And necessities also muste
we take, not for our owne consolati-
on, or for satisfaction & contentment
of our owne appetites and sensualitie,
consideringe how vnworthy we be of
all delectation, through the greuosi-
nes of our sinnes: but onely for fulfil-
linge godds holy will, who haith or-
deyned & appointed that we vse and
take such thinges, to able vs more in
his seruice, for which cause we admitt
them willingly, for releefe of oure ne-

HATRED OF OVR SELVES.

cessities: otherwise we would not admitt them at all. What in these necessities is sufficient, a mannes owne experience with a deuout mynd, will tell him.

Secondly all thinges which be painfull & greuous, as laboures, toyles, abiections, contempts, iniuries, afflictions, and the lyke: We muste take vnto vs, and desyre or will they be done to vs as much as may be without offence of God, our owne or neyghbours harme.

Thirdly if we would serue God, & hate our selues in moste commendable manner, we must not onely refuse delectable thinges, and desyre painfull & greuous as I said: but moreouer we must ioy and be gladd, when any aduersities or sharpe things happen vnto vs, & when we are depriued of pleasant thinges, yea of necessities, & this cheifly, when they are done by som others against our wills, or vpon euill intention: which yet we ought not to iudge without manifest signes, noe nor then neither with ab-

solue & full determination : but pray for our persecutours , and loue them with all our hartes , because in truthe they doe vs much good : & otherwise we shoulde loose the inestimable rewarde we are to receiue for suffering patiently persecutions & troubles .

1 *Pet.* 2

All these three things necessarye for the holy harred of our selues , the Sonn of God taughte vs , both by his woord & by his owne example , as S. *Peter* saith he suffered for vs , leaunge vs an example to folowe his steppes , whose most blessed soule was free frō all sport of sinne , & therefore his holy body should not haue bene entreated sharply , or haue suffered any greuāce at all : Yet woulde he for our example (whō he most tenderly loued) refuse and set nothing by all delectable thinges , & consent that his body & soule should suffer excedinge tormentes & greues , as it is manifest in his holy gospel . Wherefore much shame & reproch it is , to all that professe them selues to be Christians and scholers of Christe , not to learne this

holy

HATRED OF OVRE SELVES.

holye hatred, neither by his woorde sayinge : *He that hateth not him selfe, can not be my Disciple* : nor by his example, but stande euer vnwillinge to suffer any payne or iniurye for his seruice, or to heare of it either.

I confesse said *Probus*, it is greate reproch & dishonour to a Christian in this lesson, to forsake & not to imitate his Lord & God, considering he suffered all for our sakes & instruction, and the commoditie of our laboures being all our owne. But what reasons besydes this can we consider, why we should thus hate our selues? For vnlesse our willes be animated & encouraged by our vnderstanding in this point, cheisly, which (for the naturall loue we beare to our selues) semeth terrible & horrible to be thought vpon, we shall neuer desire this hatred, much lesse exercyse our selues to gett it.

The doctrine and example of our Sauour said *Alphonso*, should suffice, but I will geue you two or three reasons moe. The first is, because what soeuer euill is in vs, with all our want

of good & vertues: all I say, cometh because we hate not our selues, but loue and desyre thinges either against the commaundement of God, or contrary to his counsells & aduise.

Wherefore self loue being so hurtfull to vs, and hatred of our selues so commodious, we haue good cause to desyre & labour for this later, and to flee that other.

An other reason may be, because by sinning, we haue bene traitours against the maiestie of God: Wherefore it is meete & iuste, that we yelde him all possible satisfaction. And seeing that satisfaction shoulde be answerable in greatnes, to the greuousnes and malice of our sinnes, & we our selues can yelde but litle, and also in that we can doe, are verie negligent & slack, to vse our owne bodies hardly any way for making what satisfaction we are able: At the least for this cause we ought to hate our selues as is declared, and to desyre & be ioyfull, that every one hate, persecute, & afflict vs as much as they may without the offence of god

that

HATRED OF OUR SELVES.

that thus at the leaste we may satisfie vnto him, considering I say our own abilities otherwise suffice not.

The third & most high reason of all why we should hate our selues is, that our soules being voyde & emptie of self loue, as farr forth as may stande with Godds pleasure: They may be filled with God him self, whose goodnes in noe wyse can suffer, that being emptie of self loue, we should not be filled with the loue of him, & consequently his holy will, reigne & beare all sway in oures. But of this principall reason I shall tell you more, when we com to speake of the loue of God.

How shall we said *Probus*, vse the instruments of our soule, to obtaine this holie hatred of our selues?

When we would said *Alphonso*, refuse & not admitt, thinges delectable & pleasant, or desyre & accept hard & painefull things, as contempts, reuylings, iniuries, and the lyke: we must forgeat a litle these thinges, and not offer them thus nakedlye to oure will, but turne our mynde to consider

the

the innumerable good things which com to vs, by refusing the one sort, & accepting the other: And principally the infynite treasure of goddes loue, which we gett by hatred of our selues accordinge to his will. And then vpon these considerations, moue and inclyne our will to reiecte the pleasant & to embrace the greuous, as necessarie meanes to obtaine these inestimable goods, euer with-all being mindfull that you doe all this, for the seruice of your Lorde, and for fulfillinge his holy will & pleasure.

But touching the ioyfull acceptance of paynesfull things & aduersities: I shall tell you more, in the matters of Humilitie & Patience.

There is nomore then to be learned said *Probus*, for the hatred of our selues.

Yes one thing more said *Alphonso*, which meruelously helpeth them that are desireous to obtaine this holie hatred, which is, that continuallye and without ceasing, we persecute certain innumerable litle desires of our owne, which if we marke, com runninge v-

HATRED OF OUR SELVES.

pon vs in euery moment, & inclyne vs to selfe loue. Wherefore we must in all occasions, be watchfull ouer our owne actions, & verie circumspectly marke, whether perhapps we desire any thing which is not belonging vnto God, or not furtheringe vs towards him: And incontinent so soone as we espye any thinge to delighte vs without God, we must incline our will, to contradict & refuse it. And when we perceiue any thing to happen greuous & displeasante: We must by & by, encline our will to couett & accept it. If you be diligent in this, you shall both much sooner gett this holy hatred, and withall such dominion & gouernment ouer your self, as can not be expressed in woordes. Mark therefore this well I say againe, & exercyse it, for assuredly this poynte is the key & gate to cheife perfection.

This hatred said *Probus*, seemethe contrary to Chaitie, whereby we are all bounde to loue our selues.

Not so said *Alphonso*, but so soone as a man hateth him self in this sort, &

not

not before: he haith all the loue that he ought to haue towardes him selfe, & which is moſt profitable & glorious to him, and that which God would he ſhould haue. For then haith he the loue of God, of vertues, of eternall glory, and of all things which helpe him thither, which loue doth not luſe with it the company of any vyce.

But now let vs goe to the ſeconde thinge, that is, to know how we may adorne & bewtiſy our ſoules with vertues. As it pleaſeth you ſaid *Probus*.

THE THIRD EXERCISE.

How the ſervant of God, ſhould behaue him ſelfe in prayer.

YOU muſte know therefore ſaid *Alphonſo*, that he is ſaid to haue his ſoule adorned & bewtiſyed, that haith his naturall appetites conformable with his reaſon and godds will & Law. And this conformity is none other thing, but a certain heap of vertues, which placed orderly in the ſoule

make

make it bewtifull, and directe it as is
conuenient for the great dignity ther-
of, mitigating & repressing, all false
and euill concupiscences, which had
stooke in the soule by sinne, & dispo-
sing it to serue, & withowt all con-
tradiction, to yeld gratefull obseruance
to the will of him that created it.

And because our owne strength &
powers, are verie weake & vnable to
obreyne suche thinges: I will teache
you firste, how to call for helpe from
God by prayer. Secondly, howe by
many particular actes: you must build
these habits of vertues, speakinge of
som few which be principall. Third-
ly, how you must subdue & keepe in
seemely order, your foure naturall pas-
sions, Ioy, Sorow, Hope, & Feare.

OF PRAIER.

FOR Praier then, you muste know
that Goddes pleasure is, that we
stande neede of his supernaturall help,
because the ende & felicity whereto
he haith created vs, is supernaturall,

that is the blisse of heauen. His will also is, that we aske & demande it of him, not, but that he desyrethe more to geue it vs, then we to take or aske it: But first that we may possesse and enioy the thing with more honoure, which we get with greater endeouore & labour in suting for it, & that we may as it were meritt the same: And secondly, that as importune beggers, we may the oftner presente our selues before him, and so come into more knowledg of his Majesties greatnes, preheminance, & perfections, & more ioy in him, and loue him with a true knowledg & contempt of all thinges, which either are not God, or not furthering to him, & finally, with a perfect loue of vertue, and an hatred of all sinn. By which our necessitie of praying to him, he keepethe vs with him as with a pledge: For vnlesse we stood euer in nede of him, we should quickly without doubt, forgeat him.

To present our selues often before our Lord by prayer said *Probus*, must needes bring to vs, many good things

you say: But in what sorte may oure prayer be acceptable to god, & commodious to our selues?

That our prayer said *Alpho so*, may be gratefull in Godds sight, meritorious & effectuell, it is not so muche needfull, that the thing we alke, be of great valewe, as that in our prayer we haue an high motiue or ende. For if his motiue that praieth for the kingdome of heauen, and his that askethe breade to eate, or health of his body, be all one or equall: their paayers be of equall meritt, not-withstandinge the things they pray for, farr exceede, the one the other.

What motiue & ende said *Probus*, should we haue, to make our prayer most excellent & acceptable?

We should aske or pray for euery thinge said *Alphonso*, because it is Godds blessed will that we aske and haue it by prayer, and that obteyning it, we may be more disposed, & better abled, to loue & serue him.

Thus the prayer for breade, or any other meane thinge, is of excellent

meritt, & so disposed shew'd we be in our harts, when we come to prayer, that if we thought it displeasing or vngratefull to God, for vs to haue the thinge: we would forthwith, neither desire nor aske it. The hungry man comonly is moued to pray for bread, in releef of his necessitie: but the seruant of god that rightly praieth, ought not to aske meate, vertues, grace, glory, or any other thing, for his owne necessitie or benefyte, but for fulfilling the will of his Lorde, who much desireth that he haue them, expecting onely his petition, that he may geue them: so that the will of god (desiring that I haue the good I aske, & that I pray for it, & that by it I may be better disposed to serue him) must more moue me to desire & pray for it: the anie ioy or good I looke for thereby.

May we not sayd *Probus*, pray for Grace, vertues, forgeuenes of oure sinnes, the ioyes of heauen, or other good thinges, for some other good end besides this? A praeir said *Alphose*, may be deuout & good, which is

for

for any good or indifferent thing, to a good end, but there is none ende or motiue, which can make it so perfect and acceptable as this, in which I am moued to pray onely for the loue of God, & for fulfilling his blessed will & pleasure, and not vpon any loue to my self, or to the thange I aske, or for any other respect. And yet may we in our prayers for this ende, kepe also a loue, to the good thing we aske & wishe to our selues also with greates perfection & meritt: so that we actuallye referr it thus, that therefore we loue the thing and wish it, because it is godds will we loue it, and desire to haue it. And so we make God, and neither the thing nor our selues, the ende of our prayer.

I will geue you an example of this said *Alphonso*, againe, and withall let you see, how to vse your will rightly in praying.

A man may aske any thinge of his frend, either for the loue he beareth to it, or for his own commoditie, or for the loue of his frende: Vsuallye

men aske it for their owne good and benefite, & not for the lcue of their frend. Now the seruant of god should refuse with his will to aske any thing, for the loue he beareth to the thinge or for his own commoditie: and ask it onely for the loue of his Lord, because it pleaseth his Maiestie that he ake & haue it, that he may serue and please him the more: As he that prayeth for pardon & remissio of his sinns, & soroweth for them, should doe it more, because he seethe that to be in his soule which offendeth God, & for a desire he haith to haue it pure, that so he may yelde gratefull & acceptable seruice to his Lord: Then for any feare of punishmente or other harme or losse to him self whatsoeuer. And againe, as he that prayethe to escape tribulations, ought to feele in his hart a desire, & accordingly to pray to escape them, not cheetly for auoyding daunger, harme, or trouble: but for that tribulations may be to him, an impediment to serue God, carryinge euill withall, an vnfeaned desire and

will, that godds blessed will be done therein, if at any tyme it please him to be serued by his troubles & paines. And so finallye in askinge any other good, that we aske it, not for oure owne consolation, but that hauinge it, we may thereby be more stirred vp & furthered to serue and loue God.

It will seme easie to you, if you remember what I told you before concerning the vse of your will, and the ende that you shoulde haue in doinge all thinges: & the example I gaue you then, of him that regardinge more his frendes necessitie then his owne, bestowed on him the medicyne, which he prouyded for him selfe, will serue here also.

I remember well said *Probus*, what you said there.

Remember it said *Alphonso*, & be diligent to produce according to those instructions, many actes: and in shorte tyme, you will fynde greate sweetnes to pray vpon this motiue, thoughe in the beginning, you seeme to be drye or without comforte and deuotion,

hapneth, because you leaue your own self loue, which euer moued you before to pray. But Godds loue increasing in you: deuotion and sweetnes with exceeding great merit, will also increase.

See therefore you passe not from asking one thinge, to aske an other, before you firste inclyne your will to aske it, because God would haue you to aske it, & that you intēde to serue him by askinge it.

I vnderstande all this said *Probus*.

If you so doe said *Alphonso*, then may we speake of getting vertues for adorning our soules.

THE FOUORTH EXERCYSE.

How to gett. the vertue of Humilitye, which is one of them, that our Saviour willed vs to learne of him selfe.

ALL vertues said *Alphonso*, may best be redd, & learned in the booke of lyle, & fountayne of wisdom. our Saviour Christ. And let

none hope nor think they can be enriched with vertues, vnlesse they learn them of the Son of God made man, & principally of his sacred passion, for this is geuen vnto the world by the Father of heauen, as a moste plentifull gould-myne, that owte of it we may gather all treasures, see & heare the excellency of euery vertue.

Therefore happy is he that by continuall meditation, entrethe into the hidden & inner secretts of this myne: for there he shall finde stoared vppe, all the treasures of God.

What vertues said *Probus*, will he that we first learne of him?

He haith willed vs said *Alphonso*, to learne of him self two, which are, Humilitie, & Patience, saying, *Learne of me, that I am patient, and humble of harte*: which two, when we haue learned: we shall be full of true wisdom and not before. Of these two therefore, I will tell you howe they may be gotten.

Many haue writen of the stepps & degrees of Humilitie, for it is a ver-

the which reacheth verie high, & descendeth verie low: & without stepps let no man hope to clyme to the topp thereof: but he that once arryuethe thither, shall presently come into such knowledg of him self, & all thinges: that thereby he shall most clearly see how of him self, he is and haith verie nothinge, and that onely God is the thing, that trulie is. For which cause he desireth that all the thoughtes and powers of men be bente to praise & magnifye him onely, whose is euery thing that is. Moreouer he wisheth (because Humilitie coueteth no more then is it owne) that the whole world entreate & esteeme him as he is, that is for nothinge: And that mens harts be not occupied, yea for any litle moment, in esteeming that to be of some worth, which in truth is nothing - or a vessell of iniquitie which is worse then nothing, as euery sinner is.

Herein therefore consisteth the key of Humilitie, that this which I haue now said, may be fixed in our hartes, by many actes of good consideration.

couetinge with-all, that they which harme or dispyse vs, & that they also which see it, may thinke vs to suffer, not vpon humilitie, but because we can not otherwyle doe, as S. *Bona-venture* saith, that he which laboreth to please God, muste endeouour to be thought vyle & abiecte, not humble and modest.

Me think said *Probus*, it were good to shew our Humilitie to others, for their edification.

If a man said *Alphonso*, were of such perfect vertue, that without any repugnance or difficulty, he could wishe to be esteemed of all men vyle, abiect, & nothing, as I said before: suche a one might desire, for the edification of his neighbours, that they should think him to suffer iniuries willingly, & with ioy, for the loue of God and humilitie, & this were heroycall humilitie, which was moste perfecte in our Saujour.

I pray you Father said *Probus*, declare to me the humilitie of our Sauioure, seinge I muste haue it before

myne eyes as a patern to imitate.

The humility of our Sauour said *Alphonso*, conteyneth in it, most high & vnspcakable misteries, & better may all creatures admire it, then com nigh in folowing it. For our Sauour being God omnipotente, of infinite goodnes, and a mooste perfecte man, did choose & will with great ioy, to be esteemed for a most meane thing, yea almost for nothing, & for such a one he would be hardly intreated with iniuries, contumelies, reproches, & tribulations, from the first day of his birth till he suffred a most sharpe & shamefull deathe. All which he did, not for that they weare needefull for him self: but that we who haue great neede thereof, mighte learne the manner of humbling our selues by his example.

Now the seruant of God must study & doe his best endeouour, to frame his humilitie, like to this of our Sauours: that is, considernge his owne vylenes, abiection, and vnworthines, he ought to couet & desire, with great ioy (I say againe with greate ioy, for

this

for this is the pith of all) that in the eyes & hartes of all men, he be reputed as worthlesse, and according'y to be intreated, for of our selues we are none other, nor deserue better. This is the humilitie which oure Sauoure would haue vs to learne of him.

Why doth God said *Probus*, requyre of vs so great humilitie & contempt of our selues; & why wou'd he teach it vs with so great cost & harme to him self?

He requyreth it of vs said *Alphonso* because in truth it is conuenient for vs, & because that of our selues we haue no good, nor deserue any at all, thoe we receiue many good thinges from the magnificall hande of God, from whom we ought to acknowledge to haue receiued them, & therefore glorify him & not our selues. Again he requyreth it, because it (beinge voluntarily taken) is the perfecte medicine of our mortall infirmitie, which cometh by pryde. Neither shall any man euer be soundly cured of that disease, withowt perfecte humilitie.

And

And the more we wante of perfect curinge, the more also we shall wante of the puritie of our soule: & the more we wante of the puritie of our soule, the more shall we want of godds graces & benefites, and so much the lesse shall we be his. Now that he would teach it vs with so much harme to him self, proceeded from his infinite goodnes, & from his most tender & inefable loue to vs, not appointing men, or Angells to this office, but delighting him self to be our instructour and guyde, notwithstandinge any harmes or inconueniences, that might befall him therefore.

How may we said *Probus*, come to gett this Humilitie, and to reioyce in contempts, iniuries, & tribulations, for it is verie hard to desire these thinges?

We may obteyne all this, said *Alphonso*, by much considering the Humilitie of godds Sonn, which I coulde you of before, & the profit that cometh to our selues by it: & cheefely because we are so able & made fit, to yelde acceptable seruice vnto God,

and to please him. Wherefore we must verie often inclyne our willes, to couet and with ioy desire, abiectiōs, contemptes, and iniuries, which are so preceous & so profitable.

O how deseruedly oughte he to be humbled, or to be humble, & to desire to be despysed, that so often haith bene traiterous against his eternall lord yelding his soule to the deuill by sinn, & taking it from god, that so louingly dyed for it. Surely if we would serioulye marke this, we should receiue honoures (if at anie tyme they were offred vs) with much greife, considering they hinder vs of the inestimable goodes which we might gett by imitating & accompanying the Kinge of heauen, in contemptes, dishonoures, contumelies, & the lyke.

May not a man with humilitie said *Probus*, desire somtimes to be esteemed & honored?

Yes said *Alphonso*, he may desire this in some cases, as when (without respect of his own estimation) he haith his eye, respect, & intention onely to

some seruice, & honour which he seeth, may redownde to god thereby.

But in this case also he ought to desire such estimation with feare and sorrow, that he must be honored, & with great circumspection, that he be not deceiued with self loue.

How may I know said *Probus*, whether in such case as this I kepe humilitie, with that desire of honour?

You may know & discerne this said *Alphonso*, if you ioy noe whitt in that estimation & honour, but onely in the seruice & honour which is done to god by it. And again, if you fele in your hart an vnfeaned desire or disposition, that leauing all honour & estimation (if so it might please God) you had rather for your owne part, chose to yeld him your seruice, by suffering contempts, dyspyfinges, disgraces, & iniuries, then by that estimation, credit, & honour.

And lastly, if you fynde your hart as desirous & ioyfull, that other mē be esteemed & honored for the seruice & honour of God, as your self, or that they be preferred before you: without

any emulation.

When a man said *Probus*, haith receiued benefites & good gifts from God, why may he not delight & reioyce in them?

He may ioy & delight in them said *Alphonso*, so he kepe humilitie withall, & fall not into vayne-glorye: for otherwyse he shoulde turne all gods gifts to his dishonour, & his own greuous ruine. I must therefore by the way, geue you warning of vayne-glory, which is a vyce that defileth & destroyethe, all our vertues and good deedes, vnlesse we auoyde it well.

I pray you said *Probus*, teach me to escape it.

THE FIFTH EXERCYSE.

HOW to ouercom the vyce of vainglory, which is a mortall enemye to Humilitie & all vertue.

VAin-glory said *Alphonso*, is the Mother of all euill, & it aboue all other thinges, hindreth the increase of Humilitie. It is a complacency or

delight & ioy, which one taketh of some thing he ought not, or in some sort as he ought not. And there be diuers kyndes of it: As firste a man may glory & reioyce for his own wicked factes & euill deedes. This kind of glory & ioye, is not amonge Gods children and seruantes, but proper to graceles & most wicked persons, and therefore I will lett it passe.

Againe one may glory and ioy for some good thinge or gitte which he haith not: This also is most foolishe, vaine, & ridiculous, yet is it often incident to the good, as ordinary to the badd, proceedinge from a disordered self loue, & a prowde mynde, delighting in it owne prayse & flaterye.

Againe, one may glory & reioyce vainelye, for some good he haith or doth, or heareth of him self: This is that kynde, which assaultethe muche godds seruantes. Nowe a man may well ioye in the gifes which he haith of God, so farr forth as he seethe and hopeth thereby, some seruice to God or profitt to his owne soule. For God

haith

OF VAIN-GLORY.

haith left it in our owne liberty, that we may so much ioy for euerie good gift of God, as we know it to be from God, & to redownd to gods honour & seruice: But when it once passeth this ordinance appointed by god, by & by it becometh vain-glory, or vain ioy excedinge the limitts appoynted by God, as glorying and reioycinge in our selues, where we should glory onely in God.

How may we discern said *Probus*, when our glorye & ioye is vayne, or true & spirituall as it should be?

This vain-glorie said *Alphonso*, is so deceptfull and subtile: that one yet a nouice & weake in vertue, may often thinke him self to ioye in God for the good he haith, and neuertheless much vain-glorie is mixed therewith. Wherefore till a man euidently know, & haue thoroughly tryed vertues to be in him self, he shoulde euer flee all kynd of ioy and complacency whyles he calleth to mynd the benefites that he haith receiued from God or the good giftes he haith or heareth

spoken of him self, and rather accus-
tom his harte to motions of feare, at
these tymes, as suspecting vain glorie
which verye secretly vsethe to creepe
vpon vs in such occasions. And sure-
ly he ought to suspect or think it vain-
glorie & ioy which he haith of godds
gifs geuen him: so long as he haith
not as much ioy & glorye in the gifs
& benefites, which he knoweth other
men to haue receiued from god, as he
haith of his own. For albeit we ought
to desire and choose vertues for our
selues, before other, & also to ioy that
(seing it is godds will and ordinance
that bothe we & others shoulde haue
them) it hath pleased him to bestow
them vpon vs: Yet when both we &
they, haue receiued gifs from godds
bountifull hande, seing god him self
equally ioyeth in both: our ioy & glory
in lyke sorte, oughte to be equall for
them both in God onely, & that his
blessed will is fulfilled.

I vnderstand this said *Probus*: but
teach me I pray you, how I may a-
uoyde this fowle sinne of vain-glory,

and

and vaine ioy.

You may said *Alphonso*, by the vse of your vnderstanding & will, ouercom it, & escape all the daunger thereof. For by the assistance of gods grace you can hate that, which you once know to be vaine & false. Consider therefore the vanitie & falsed thereof by this example or comparison.

You will confesse it to be a fowle thinge, if some courtier would esteeme it for a matter of great valew or worth or would glory in his harte, that he had offred him self to a litle daunger for the seruice & loue of his Prince, who had yelded him self before, to most greuous tormēts & cruell wounds for the courtiers sake & cause.

But if the same courtier, did not onelye in his owne conceipte, highly esteeme that litle he had done for his Prince, to whom he was so infinitely bonnd & behoulden: but moreover before others, woulde proudly vaunt him selfe thereof: it were most ridiculous, to-too grosse follie, intolerable pryde & leuitie: Yet were it

more abominable vanitie by farr, if that Prince had suffred all his tormētts & woundes voluntarily & without any comforth or succour of his courtier, but the courtier contrari-wise, had suffered his litle with great fauour, assistance, & comforth, of the Prince, & hauing promise also before his laboures, of great benefites & rewarls, & receiued the same afterwards: So in likemanner he falleth into noe lesse abominable vanitie, yea & into worse incomparablie, that foloweth after vain-glory. For our high God, and King of incomprehensible Maiestie, of infinite power & honour, through his owne goodnes onely without any bounde, behoulding our extreme necessities, for our sakes and saifties, exposed him self, to a most sharpe and ignominious death: In which we not onely gaue him noe comforth nor succoure, but more-ouer we yelded him noe thanks, yea all that were with him, fledd & forsooke him: & we also more forsake him now through defect of our vertue, when his god-

head

head, mercy, and goodnes, are manifested vnto vs. Which thinges be-
 inge thus, let vs acknowledge how
 vayne it is for any man to glory for
 his seruice he doth to God, omitting
 in the meane season, to glory & ioue
 in god onely. And moreouer let vs
 consider how exceeding vaine it is, to
 desire for this smal seruice, to be high-
 ly esteemed with others, whereas for
 that tyme whiles their hartes are oc-
 cupied, in iudging vs to be of some
 worth, they cease to be occupied in
 worthily esteeming & praysing God,
 of whom we haue, & whose is, all our
 good.

God forbidd, that the hart which
 is not occupied in highly esteeming
 & praising God, to whom all prayse
 is due, shoulde be occupied in judg-
 ing of any worth, to whom noe such
 thing is due. And he also deserueth
 much blame for his consenting, that
 thinketh other to occupy their hartes,
 in praising & esteeming him beinge so
 vyle & abiect, sealinge in that meane
 tyme to magnify god for all his good-

nes & gites, & is not ashamed nor greiued, for so great disorder & abuse of thinges. It augmenteth also greatly our vanitie, that whatsoeuer we do, or suffer, all is by the mighty grace & help of our most high God. It is said *Probus*, a thing both glorious & meitorious, that we accept the gifts & graces of God, & not reiect or resist them: and then why may we not glorie & think well of our selues that we accepted them? We neuer saw man said *Alphonso*, that would vainly glory & boaste, onely because he had accepted benefites, done him by a Prince, but rather it would haue bene iudged playne madnes, to haue refused the. And it is great folly for a mā to glorye and boaste, that he would not be madd whē he might, or proudly to behaue and esteeme him self, because he would not leap into a pitt & drowne himself when he might haue done it. Muche lesse cause surely haith any man to glorye, because he accepted godds gites & refused them not, considering that their verye ac-

OF VAIN-GLORY.

ceptinge and will to receiue them, is not done by their own power & ability or nature, but principally by the grace and helpe of God, as S. Paule saith: *What hast thou that thou hast not receyned? & if thou hast receyned it, why doest thou glory?*

1 Cor. 4

Nowe after your vnderstandinge haith had these & such lyke considerations of this vyce: moue & incline your will as I taughte you before, to refuse & hate it: And standing firmly in the true conceipte of your owne basenes & vnworthines, yeld all praise & glory to God to whom it is due, & in him onely, let all your ioye and glory be, & rest.

The actions of your will, you must diligently vse in all occasions, where this vain-glorie would creepe in, and draw you to delighte in your self, or in any thing you haue. This may suffice concerning the euill vyce of vain-glorie. Now will we speake of patience which is the seconde vertue we are to learne of our Sauour Christe, vnlesse you teste vnassatified in some

thing

thing I haue said.

Goe forwarde said *Probus*, I pray you, for I vnderstande you well, and haue nothing to replie.

THE SIXT EXERCISE.

HOW to plant in our soules, the vertue of Patience, which is one of the two vertues, which our Saviour would haue vs to learn of him.

Patience said *Alphonso*, is so dear a sister & companion to Humility, that comonly they are found together: And by what waies & paths the one is found, you may finde the other also. And as we said before that to gett Humilitie, it is necessarie we sett before our eyes, the humilitie of godds Sonne: so muste we doe also the same here, for obteyninge this vertue of Patience. For who can comaine or repyne in sufferinge injuries, or any tribulation (hauinge deserued them as we all haue) when he considereth with how great mildnes and pati-

ence

ence, his Lorde god voluntarily did choose to suffer so manie & so greate injuries, contumelies, persecutions, & tormentes, together with a moste bitter death: who (besides that he was true God & Lord of all) was also a man of more noble, delicate, & tender complexion, then any other man in the world, & more feelinge, anie affliction.

Who will not patiently & myldly sustain for curing his owne sinnes, a nie toyle, vexation, or distresse that may befall: if he consider his God to haue susteyned farr greater for the sinns of other, & to bringe remedy to our euills.

The example of our Sauioure said *Probus*, should indeede moue & suffice vs to take anie aduersitie patientlye: but our frayle natures, can not away with trouble or affliction.

Naturallie indeede said *Alphonsus*, we are inclyned to flee & abhorre the: But godds grace preuenting our wills & cooperatinge with vs, we may be brought in short tyme, to accept and

embrace

embrace them, and this the rather, if we consider, not onely this example which our Saviour haith geuen vs, but moreouer cast our eye, to the great commoditie we gett thereby, which our Lorde also is desirous we labour to obtaine.

For persecutions & tribulations, are as it were a hammer or fire, where-with the rust or canker of our soules is taken away: or as a launcinge knife, thrust into our soules, to let out the poyson of our self loue, which setteth there & draweth vs from all good; that once freed from that filthe, we may worke the high woork of God, that is, loue & serue him as we should.

For which cause, we ought hartely to loue & pray for our persecutours, & thank God that prouideth vs so good surgeons.

Teache me the way said *Probus*, I pray you, to gett this vertue.

If you remember said *Alphonso*, I taught it you before, when we talked of the way, how to plant vertuous habits in our soule. For there I put the ex

ample

ample

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7.

ample of Patience, which may suffice also for this place.

I remember it verie well said *Probus*.

That also which I taughte you said *Alphonse*, of the hatred of your selfe, you must call to mynde againe in this mater, for the reasons I gaue you why you should hate your self, may serue fitlye, to moue you to suffer patiently, any aduersitie or affliction. Now let vs propounde one example of some odious matter, that may befall.

You either suspect or certainly know a man to speak or reporte some euill of you, which you neuer committed.

Hereby three dartes are caste at you to wound your soule: from all which the souldier and seruant of God, must cleare & acquyte him self, that by his fight, his Lorde may be serued & honored, and his owne soule bewtified.

The first is the dart of euill suspicion or iudgment, againste the man, or against his intention. From this dart you must withdraw your self, and let it passe, inclyninge your will, not to

accept

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accept or deale with it, as consenting to any such suspicion or iudgment, but to referr it wholly vnto God, who is the high Iudg of all, and haith willed vs not to iudge. For fulfilling of whose will, we ought with great ioy to forbear to iudge, and not to vsurpe or take vpon vs his office.

The second is the darre of greuous impatiencye; To this you muste oppose your self with all your strengthe, soying in the paine and iniury, which cometh to you by that occasion, and the more you seme to ioye of it, the lesse will the deuill assaulte you with impatience, lest he geue you occasion of so great meritt.

That you may well demean your selfe in receiuing this dart, remember what I said of the hatred of your self.

The third is the dart of hatred, of him whom you suspecte or know, to haue done you wronge. To this also you must oppose your self, inclyninge your will, to produce some singular acte of loue towards him, because it is godds will, that you loue and pray

for

for your enemies . And in truth as I said , they doe you exceeding greate good , if your self hinder it not , and they be as surgeons , to cure the festering woundes of our soule .

Thus in all occasions of aduersitie , the seruant of God should be watchfull , and euer stand prepared patiently to endure , what-soeuer it please the his Lorde to let befall for his tryall , that in so doing , he may honour his Lord , benefite , and (as our Samoure said) possesse his own soule , which remaineth as voyd of all good , captiue to the denill , and quite losse , if it be spoyled of this vertue of patience .

Nowe if you thinke good , let vs speake of the foure affections or passions of the soule .

THE SEAVENTH EXERCYSE.

*HOW to moderate and keepe in
order, the foure naturall
passions of the soule.*

THese passions said *Alphonso*, be
Ioy, Sorow, Hope, & Feare: &
they be naturall to euery one, as
to ioy for a presente good, to sorowe
for a present euill, to hope for a fu-
ture good, and to feare a future euill.

I will teach you how to guyde and
brydle them conueniently for the ser-
uice and honour of God, and the re-
payringe of your soule. For they may
bringe vs much harme if they be left
at libertie vnrestrayned, because they
neuer cease ranginge vpp and downe
in our soules, now one, now an other.

And we may well say, that all our
euills come vpon vs, because they are
permitted, to wander abowte, and
runne vnbrydled: Yea they bringe
much annoyance and hurte to spiri-
tuall persons, howe lightlye soeuer
they walke in them.

He only may kepe them in good order & great moderation, that worketh all thinges, as well internal as external, for God, as I soude you before, & walketh in the hatred of himself, as you haue harde.

When are these affections said *Probna*, kepe in due order & moderation.

When we yelde said *Alphonso*, do consent to any of their motions, further then we know pleaseth God; & whereby he may receiue some grateful service: Otherwyse, we oughte euer to repell their motions & banish them from vs, if we desire to walke a faise way towarde God.

May we not said *Probna*, be glad and ioyfull for any good thinge that hapneth vnto vs, & in lyke sorte be sorowfull for euill.

The seruantes of God said *Alphonso*, should be gladd & ioy in nothing but God, or thinges which belong or direct & further them to him. The reason is, for that hauinge in God; & in such thinges, so great cause & matter of ioyes: they are verye foolish and

vaine, that occupye them selues, in
ioying for any other, considering their
powers & force to ioy in God & lone
him, are the weaker, by how much
more they are deuyded, into diuers
ioyes & busines. And considering
again, that albeit we yelde our selues
wholly to ioy in God, yet are we not
able to doe it sufficiently: How much
lesse can we doe it, if we distract our
selues to ioy in many things?

Wherefore by the vse & power of
our will, as I taught you before, we
must doe one of these two, either pre-
sently so sone as it offereth it self, re-
pell & putt away all ioye and gladnes
which is not in God, or thinges be-
longinge vnto him: or direct & order
it for God, as the ende thereof, so it
be not some vaine or vnlawfull ioye.

Phil. 4 And thus shall we doe as the Apo-
stle willet vs saying: *Ioy in our Lord*
at all tymes: I say againe, ioye. For the
which cause, we must looke warelye
about vs, for daily innumerable thinges
of small weight, occurre & offer them
selues to vs, bringinge occasions and

causes of ioy & gladnes: from which forth-with we ought to vnwynde our selues; knowinge all ioyes which are offered vnto vs by the world, are assured harmes, & age good to vs at all.

In a most potent and ryche King, you know it would be iudged, a very base & vyle disposition, to make so greate reckning of a peny, that the winning of it would make him yetie ioyfull; & the loosing of it, verie sorrowfull & greined: But farre greater is our basenes & vilitye, if when alwaies we haue present, the infinite goodes which God possesseth for him self & vs, in which we oughte incessantly to ioye: we turne our selues to ioy in other tryflinge thinges which occur in the world, when especially we ought to loue our Lord more then our selues, & more to respect his glory then our owne, which yet he will geue vs most aboundantlye, if we faithfully and sincerely serue him, in this our banishment.

OF SORROW.

IN lyke sort may we speake of him that soroweth for any thing of this world that may happen, except sin & things inducing thereto. For it may be well iudged great basenes, to sorow for any such temporall thinge of this lyfe, whearas we haue before oure eyes, so great glorye and inestimable goodes as I said God hath prouided for vs, for which we ought euer to reioyce & be gladd. Wherefore the seruant of God, muste suffer noe sorow nor heauines to stay in his harte, but that onely which is for sinne: because this sorow being a passion which respecteth some present euill, or some good lost, & true euils & losses cannot happen, but onely for sinne: He ought with reason to sorowe for none other thinge. And hauing present so infinite an euill to sorowe for as sinne is: he doth most foolishlye, if denying his force & strength, he sorowe for any other thing besides, considering especially, that all his powers &

abilities

abilities collected to this one woork,
suffice not to sorow so much for sin,
as he should doe.

These sorowes which offer them-
selues quillie to vs vpon any tribulati-
on or aduersitie, we may easily repell,
if we consider, that we be gods more
then our owne, & that he hath more
tender care ouer vs, then we can haue
of oure selues, and beste knowethe
what is expedient for vs. And ther-
fore what painefull thing or aduersi-
ty soeuer hapneth, it ought to be wel-
com to vs, so long as it endureth, &
we must take it ioyfullye as from the
hande of our louinge Lorde, and as a
thinge fitt and conuenient for one that
is godds, & sorow nomore for it, then
God (whose we are) wil lech that we
sorow, speaking thus within our selues:
Why haue I greater care of my self,
then my Lord god willeth that I haue,
seing I am not myne owne but his,
who loueth me tenderly, & can not
but continually behould me.

May we not then said *Probus*, seke
meanes to deliuer and free our selues

from suffering such paynesfull things
and aduersities, or we shoulde beare
them still with ioy, & let them alone
to godds care & providence.

As it is godds will said *Alphonso*,
that so long as we haue them, we euer
suffer them with ioy, how painfull so-
euer they be, & take them as fro: the
hand of our most louing father (which
ioyfull patience, will greatly mitigate
their paine) so it is also his will, that
we procure & vse with ioyfull mode-
ration, such means for our remedie,
& deliuerance, as we know he hath
left vs, and would haue vs to take, as
physicke in sicknes, meate in hunger,
peace & safty in persecution, and the
lyke: But all this because it is his will
we doe it, and that our frailties may
serue him the better, being deliuered
from such molestations & troubles.

How shall we said *Probus*, dryue a-
way & expell, these motions of sorow
and greiues, which the miseries of this
world bring hourly vpon vs, & how
shall we get this ioy, whiles we are in
the paines of them?

19 **Sore** for ioy, & day for paine, is to
20 **Kepe** with thee as a certaine game.
21 **Why** shoulde we said **Praba**, couer
these thinges, whereby such grief and
molestation come to vs?

Cap. 2

First said *Alphonso*, because they come all from the hand of God as Iob saith. Again because we deserve them by our sinnes. Lastlye because they bring to vs many commodities, and cure the festered vicers of our soule.

OF HOPE.

NOwe by Hope (not as it is the thirde supernaturall vertue, but a naturall affection or passion, common to all mankind.) we expecte and looke for many thinges of this life either pleasant or commodious to vs. Yet nothing we hope for, should settle it self or take place in our hartes, but onely God, & the thinges whereby we thinke our selues, to draw nearer to him & serue him. Whatsoever is besides, we ought to esteeme it as nothing. And if we perceiue the Hope of any thinge, to be more fixed in our hartes, or to occupye & delighte our myndes, then the blisse of heauen or vertues, which we hope from God: it muste forthwith be expelled, as a most hurtfull and disordered thinge.

OP^{er} FEARE.

IN lyke manner also all feare is to be lefte that is not of God, as our Saviour willed vs, not to feare them that kill the bodye, and can doe noe more: but God that can cast both body & soule into hell fyre. And *Dauid* said, *God is the protectour of my life; whom shall I feare.* All the moments of our lyues, with all thinges belonging vnto vs, are in the hands of god, and can not happen to vs, otherwyse then he will permitt. And therefore we shoud rather wish our owne eyes to be pulled owte, then aduisedly commit any thinge that may displease his Maesty. For all other thinges, there is no cause why we should feare them. For though all the calamities of the worlde fall vpon vs: yet if we feare them not, they can doe vs noe harm nor true euill, but rather if we encounter them corragiously & boldly, & receiue them ioyfully, because it is our Lordes will we suffer them in memorye of those he suffered for vs: they will increase in vs, eternall me-

rit of glory & honour.

Wherefore we should be prepared alwaies to repute as nothing, or rather to esteeme as most preceous Jewells & ornaments: all troubles & molestations of the world. And if at anie tyme some feare creepe vpon vs: presently with our will, to encounter & repell it, lest it occupye the place, in which the reuerent feare of God most necessary for vs, should be harbored.

He that can moderate, rule, and subdue, these passions in this sorte, shall enioye greate peace, and arryue shortly, to high perfection of vertue, & be able rightly to iudg of all things, as the christian philolopher *Boetius* saith,

*If thou wilt the truth behoulde with
light most cleare:*

*Away with Ioy, Sorow, Hope, and
Feare.*

Hauinge declared, what way you may repaire the ruine & destruction of your soule: it remaineth now that we speake of the loue of God, which Exercise is the most principall seruice

can doe him, & the ende of all which
we haue spoken of hitherto.

Take your reſte nowe, for you are
wearie with trauell: in the morninge
God willing, we ſhall make an ende
of this matter.

THE THIRDE PARTE,

CONTERNING the way how to

loue God, our neighbours,

and our ſelues.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

After they had ſlept a whyle, &
Alphonſo finiſhed his vſual de-
uotions: they came together a-
gaine, & Alphonſo ſaid,

Now

Now my sonne; if you be satisfied in
all thinges we talked of yester night:
Let vs goe forward as I promised you.
I rest fully satisfied said *Probus*, in all
you haue said hitherto: Therefore I
pray you procede to teach me how I
may loue God.

The loue of God said *Alphonso*, is
a fyre, which God would haue al-
wayes burninge, on the Altar of our
soule, & if you throughlye knewe the
worthines and excellency thereof, all
woulde seeme litle, that hitherto we
haue said, of the reparation & ador-
ning of the soule, by which so high a
woorde is to be performed. For the
acte of louing God is of so greate ex-
cellency, that not Saintes in heauen,
nor any thinge that is or can be crea-
ted, can doe any woork more high or
perfecte. For which cause the sonne of
God himselfe, calleth this the greatest
and first commaundement. Yea if all
the endeuours & strenghties of Angells
& men, were heaped together in one
Angell or man, he could doe nothing
more worthy, then is the acte of lo-

Mat. 22

woork

uing

God. And nothing that is or can be made, by the omnipotent power of God: can be sufficient to loue God with that perfection which his infinite goodnes & worthines doth deserve.

This loue of God, incomparably excelleth all other supernaturall vertues or woorks, & without it, none other gift or qualitie that man haith, profiteth him any thinge at all, or is so be esteemed, as S. *Paul* saith largelye. This is the incessant & eternall woork of God him self: For he being of infinite goodnes & excellency, is infinitely to be loued, and is continually occupied with all his infinite power, in louing his owne infinite goodnes & ioying in the same. And nothing being more consonant to equitie, nothinge so profitable or glorious to our selues, then that we loue him, who is an infinite good, & infinitely to be beloued, & whom we can not sufficiently loue as he deserueth, albeit our strength & abilitie were infinite: His moste holy and righteous will is, that we doe the same thinge,

1 Cor. 13

with

with all our forces, which he dothe continually with his: that is, loue him & ioy in him with all our harts, power, & strength. Yea & so greatly he requyreth & desireth this most diuine woork of vs, that he would yeld him self to a most cruell death, that so he might procure & prouoke vs to loue him, & all this for our good, & not for any benefite of his owne.

All other things besides this loue of God which are commanded vs, or in the holy scriptures requyred of vs, are but for that they be helpes to this loue, & to omit them, would greatly hinder the same. Vices & finnes forbidden vs, are nothing els, but an inordinate loue of vaine things, which occupye the place of our hartes, deputed onely for God. Neither doe vertues serue for other ende, then fitly to dispose the soule for this loue: Which vertues notwithstanding, are so necessarie for this loue of God, that it were great presumption, to thinke we could obtaine it, without great exercise in them.



To loue God said *Probus*, must of necessitie be a worke, of great excellencye and worthines: but I pray you tell me what this loue is, and how it may be done.

I must tell you first said *Alphonso*, how there be two sortes of loues, or louers of God. The one loueth him, for that he is a sweete and bountifull lorde, most liberally communicating his goodnes to his creatures: These are also much delighted in his seruice, and they aske many giftes of him, & pray with great contemplation of his Magnificency and knowledge of the excellency of vertues & graces which they pray for. Often also they come to him, as to the fountain of all sweetnesses. And by reason of the greate delight & consolation, which they feele in their soule, they imagin this loue of theires to be most perfect & of highest merit.

This seemeth said *Probus*, to be a perfect loue of God.

I wishe said *Alphonso*, that all they which loue not God: would loue him

at the least in this sorte. But the Ma-
iestie of God permitteth not his true
louers to be content with this kynd of
loue though it be good, & may suf-
fice to exercise beginners & nouices
in for som time, because from this they
easily passe, to the highest & most per-
fect loue, whereof by & by I will tell
you.

How may we know said *Probus*, that
this kynd of loue, is imperfect & fraile?

They that loue in this manner said
Alphonso, forth-with when this sen-
suall sweetenes is wantinge & depar-
teth, goe with an heauy hart, and dull
courage abowt thinges which belong
to God. And they are so overcome
with the frailties of their owne nature,
as almost if they had not had any such
loue at all. For they procure & seke
for corporall delights, as to eate and
drinke daintely: They desire and ac-
cept worldly fauours, friendships, ho-
nours, praise, estimation, & other
vayne thinges, pleasing their sensuali-
tie (yet without mortall sinn) asmuch
as other persons, that neuer had tasted

of things pertaineing to god. Yea & often in the very tyme when they are visited with such sweetenes: they are intangled with certain vaine affections, & such as be somtimes not a litle sensually, as delighted with the sweete natures, conditions, familiarities, & bewtie, of some persons. Againe, these louers commonly couet to be seene and accounted deuout, and they are greued when they perceiue, they are not reputed for such, neither doe they ioy when they perceiue other persons to be reckned more deuout & better qualified then themselves. These & such like sports & imperfections they haue: All which be so abiect, that the high loue of God (which we are to speake of) doth not brooke them with it, no nor when it wanteth that sweetenes in the sensuall appetites: whereby we may rightlye conclude, this kynde of loue, to be frayle & imperfect, as louing cheefely for his owne commodity or delight.

If this loue will not serue: to what purpose is it said *Probus?*

It is verie profitable said *Alphonso*, first, because he that haith it, may easily cast from him the forsaide imperfection and spottes, with the loue of vaine thinges.

Secondly, because such a louer, is in a verie neare disposition, to produce many actes of the higheste and most perfect loue, when he knoweth it.

Which is then this second kynde of loue said *Probus*?

It is said *Alphonso*, A certayne acte or worke of our will, vehemētly (& sometimes also with sweetenes) loving or desiring, that God be that infinite goodnes he is; And possesse as much glory, dominion, & power, as indeede he possesseth to him self, ouer vs & all thinges. And again, that whatsoeuer is or may be, loue him, serue him, and glorify him, for his infinite goodnes & worthines onely. And all this is done for that the excellency of his Maiesty requyreth that we doe it, with all oure abilitie & strengthe.

He therefore that wuld truly and perfectly loue God, must often me-

ditate

LOVE OF GOD.

directe & call to mynde what God is, & delight in him. Moreouer thinke what great glory he hath, and what dominion ouer vs & all creatures, & ioye for it, as men are wonte to ioye for the dignitie & dominion of their dearest frends. And with this also be must wish, that all thinges may serue & loue him, desiring this a thousand wayes, & procuring it ten thousand, & all this for God & his goodnes on-lye. For it is meete & iuste, that we loue his infinite goodnes & power, in most excellent manner that may be deuised. And seinge noe ende is higher then God him self, who is the beginning & ende of all thinges; it followeth, that he oughte to be loued principally, not for that which we receiue or hope for of him, but for him self which is infinitely amiable.

Wherefore we shoulde accustome our willes, that they be moued to loue & to be delighted, in the perfection, glorie, & treasures of our Lorde, not because we feele i. vetenes in this loue, nor for the giftes we haue receiued or

hope to receiue hereafter, but forgetting as it were these thinges, loue him as moſte worthy to haue all the wil'es & powers of Angells & men occupied, in deſiring & delightinge that his Maieſtye haue all the infinite good it haith without reſpecte that any parte thereof, may redownd to vs, though indeede ſo much the more ſhall come to vs, by how much more we loue him without reſpect of our own good.

By what certaine marke or ſigne ſaid *Probus*, may we knowe, when a man haith this loue?

He haith it ſaid *Alphonſo*, that loueth god as much when he ſheweth him ſelf ſeuere & ſharpe, as when he is ſweete & mylde; as much when by iuſtice he puniſheth, as when mercifully he geueth benefites: as much in aduerſitie as proſperity. Such a man loueth not God becauſe he is dulce & ſweete: Yet he loneth ſweetenes, becauſe it is geuen by God, & bringeth him courage to ſerue God more diligently: He is not terrified nor affrighted with chaſtiſements, but taketh them

with that loue which the holy hande & fatherly will of God that scourgeth doth requyre. He praieth not, as drawne with loue & sweetenes of the gift, but that his soule enryched thereby, may waxe stronger & more feruent in godds seruice. He is not offended or troubled to see him self desolate of consolations, yet he soroweth if any thing be in him which haith displeased or doth offende, the eyes of so high a Maestie. He asketh not forgeuenes & pardon of his sinnes for escapinge paine, or recouering his lost grace, vertues, tytle, & right to eternall glorie, but that his soule (hauing obteyned pardon) may be more gratefull & acceptable to God, & may loue & serue his highnes in puritie.

He haith noe affection, that may withdraw his hart any other way from God. He doth not remember or regarde, whether men think of him or noe. He is not greeued, when he is contemned or reiected. He shunneth & is sorowfull for credit & honoure offered him, fearing lest they be vnto

him, hinderances to humilitie. He ioyeth for the good & honour of others, thinking that they accept or desire them, without ambition or vanitie, for the better seruice of God and helpe of his people. Such a louer hath all things, and yet hath nothing. He submitteth him self to all, & all serue him. He shunneth all sweetenes, and he feeleth nothing but that is sweete. In God whom he loueth, he knoweth what he oughte to doe, to speake, to thinke: & for him only he thinketh, he speaketh, he doth euery thinge. He liuinge, is not he that liueth, but it is Christ that hueth in him, geuinge him to liue a diuine lyfe. In louing him self, he loueth not him self, but he loueth the God almighty, for whose sake he desireth all good thinges. He ioyeth in nothinge, but that whereby his Lorde is serued, & that he thinketh gratefull in his sighte. And finallye, he euer ioyeth in his hart and thanketh God who in louinge him self infinitely, doth supply what is due to him from all his

creatures

creatures.

How may we gett this loue of god
said *Probus*?

It is vaine presumption said *Alphonso*,
for any man to thinke, he can leap
to it at his p'eaſure, with hout making
due preparation, & folowing the ſame
pathe which godds ſonn haith made vs
both by his owne example & doctrine.

What preparation or pathes are
theſe ſaid *Probus*?

He that would receiue this pretious
liquour into his ſoule ſaid *Alphonſo*,
muſt firſt of neceſſitye occupye him
ſelf for many daies in theſe Exerchyſes
which I tould you of in the ſeconde
parte, but before all, in the hohc ha-
tred of him ſelf: otherwyle he ſhall be
deceiued & profit nothing at all.

I vnderſtand you well ſaid *Probus*.

That done ſaid *Alphonſo*, he muſt
woork diligently in this ſorte, whether
he be preuented by God with bene-
dictions of ſweetnes or not. He muſt
breeſly call to minde, how vnmeaſu-
rable & infinite the good & glorie is
that God poſſeſſeth, conſidering him

as the best and most worthy, that all creatures ioy for his goodnes, & ther-vpon by & by inclyne his will to desire, & ioy for so great a good of his Lord, & let him continew in that act so long as he can. If he be a litle distracted or waxe could in it, let him forth-with retorne to it againe in the same manner, his hart euer leapinge with ioy, in consideringe God to be full of infinite perfections & goodnes, And by continuance, he shall doubtles be aduanced to this perfect loue.

The honour, glorie, & perfections of our Lord are infinite & of infinite excellency, and in lyke sorte, euerye thinge in particuler that he woorketh or createth, doth shew forth and declare to vs, a singular goodnes & worthines in him. And seing that all the moments of our lyfe, suffice not fully to heare, or consider them as they are in him: we ought at the least, vnder name & tyle of infinite goodnes, honour, & perfections, to heape them together, & to produce actes of conu-ting, that God haue them all, and to

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ioy all the minutes of our lyfe that he haith them considering we owe all this to him as most due. And so muche may we exercyse our selues in these actes (although we want that sweetenes which they call deuotion) that in euery place & busines, we may oft loue God in this sorte, withowt seking any solitary places, as it hapneth daily when one frend ioieth sodanly withowt more opportunitie of place or cōpanye, when he heareth or remembreth some good to haue befallen his deare frende. That which I toulde you before of the vse of your will, & of the ende of all your actions, helpe much in these actes how you shoulde produce them, & that you must doe all for this ende, because God is most worthy of it, & desireth that we doe it for him.

Perhapps said *Probus*, we might gett this loue more easilye by prayer, doinge as you taughte me, when you spake of it, & by the exercyses of those vertues you reherfed before.

He shall obteyne it said *Alphonso*,

the sooner & better, that together with prayer, will help him self with the acts of his will, as I coulde you before: which he may doe both in prayer and without it. For in euery such act, there is a new seruice to God, & a new increase of the loue of God, of grace, & of meritt.



And as noe artificer, how skilfull soeuer he be, profiteth any thing by his arte, but onely whyles he woorketh in it, so the seruant of God, is made richer in the loue of God, but onely when he produceth the speciall actes of the same loue: Which acte of loue, how short soeuer it be, beinge a farr greater, better, more preceous, and a more inestimable good, then all thinges els that any creature can doe in heauen or earth: We ought euery houre many tymes to worke it, that doinge our best endeouour in it during this lyfe, we may receiue more grace and ability to worke it for euer in heauen, where those blessed Saints loue God more seruently & more perfectly, which more loued him heare on

earth.

Wherefore we should deeply consider and condemne our owne negligence and folly: and seinge we ought neuer to cease from this acte of louing god (both because it is dew to his maiestie, and the acte of it self is of an inestimable profit) we should most bitterly lament euery moment of our life that we lett passe without this loue.

And specially we ought to bewaile our sinnes, which (if they be mortall) are deadly enemies to it, or (if they be veniall) hinder so great a good, and coole the seruour thereof. In like sorte also should we reprove ourselues if we be not exceeding glad and ioyfull, of euery thing that may further vs to it as iniuries, contempns, persecutions, &c. Or if we sorow not so much when anie impediment is geuen vs to it, as are humaine fauour, sensuall and prophane delectation, temporall honours, credit, prayfes, &c.

Our frailty is such said *Probus*, & our necessitie so great, that oftentimes we can not be gladd of iniuries, tribulations, and the lyke, nor refuse

things

things delectable and prosperous.

It sonetimes said *Alphonso*, through weaknes of body, or because as yet we haue not gotten so much vertue as were needfull for our sufferinge of aduersities ioyfully, but we must flee the and our persecutours, or againe procure and receiue delicate and pleasant things: In such cases I say, we muste looke that we doe these things with actuall intention to auoyding greater euils, and sorow also much, in that by fleeing aduersities and troubles, we depart from a thing which should further vs to so great a good as is the loue of God. And againe that by takinge delectable things, we omit and forgo the sharpe, which are most due vnto vs for punishment of our sinnes & negligences.

All this moreouer we ought to doe with humble prayer to our Lord, that he would vouchsaue to strengthen vs in body and soule, for better resistinge our owne frailtie, whereby through defect of our vertue, it is needfull we auoyde such trouble, or vse such de-

lightfull

lightfull thinges, and that also by his grace, we may be disposed, notwithstanding these impediments of our infirmities, perfectly to loue him.

What remedye & helpe haue we said *Probus*, if we finde our selues verie dull & heauy, whiles we endenour to produce these actes of loue, & to bring all our motions, into the obedience & seruice of God: for so it often hapneth in other exercyses of deuotion & well doinge.

The same may happen also in this high woork said *Alphonso*, but then we may assure our selues that it cometh because we wante the holy hatred of our selues, which is the foundation & most principall disposition to this loue of God. Or again, because there cleueth in our hartes some inordinate affection to some earthly thinge, as loue of needelesse delectation, or affection to some person or busines not rightly ordered. Wherefore he that feleth him self so dull, must search owr diligently in him self, such defect or affection, and take it away by contrary

actes, as we taughte before, and shall more hereafter.

For to inclyne our will to produce actes of the loue of God, aboue all thinges, withowt hauinge first gotten the holy hatred of our selues, or whiles our affection to any earthly thing that may deilght vs endureth (not being ordeyned or referred either actuallye or virtually to God) is much lyke as if a man would cutt with a hammer, thinges requiringe a raisoure or sharpe knyfe. For the perfection & excellency of this loue (the least act wherof, may aduance a man to a highe degree of eternall glory in heaven) doth not permitt with it, any such vyle & baife thinge. Besides this also the seruant of God, must be warie of the assaults of his mortall enemy the deuil, who neuer ceaseth to molest and hinder them that goe forwarde in any vertue, but moste maliceously goeth a-bowt to harme and ouerthrow them, that endeouour to obteyne, this most holy loue of God.

What way I pray you said *Probus*,

can he chiefly hinder vs?

Among many other said *Alphonso*, he hindreth vs by one, which is verie secrett, & yet much dangerous & hurtfull, that is, by a certain meane estimation, contempt, negligence, & couldnes of the minde, towards the woork of the loue of God, which some persons haue, whiles they think, heare, or reade, the chiefe poynt of it to consist, in the desyre of Godds perfections, goodnes, & glorie, & in ioying in them as I said before.

How can this said *Probus*, happen to any man in this holy woork?

It hapneth said *Alphonso*, because they litle conceiue or marke the worthines of this thing, & the enemy doth assaile & trouble them withall: And principally it chanceth to them that are not preuened with the sweteness which this loue is accustomed to bringe with it.

For they hearing as I said euen now this loue to consist in this, that we desire & inwardly feelee in our selues, a complacency & ioy, for all the infinit

goodnes and glory which are in god:
& this onely for God: they waxe could,
thinking this worke not to be so high
& excellent as it is, but iudge other
woorkes aswell corporall as spirituall,
to exceede this, & to be more besee-
ming godds seruantes, as preachinge,
disputing. gouerninge others, feigh-
ting for the faith, almes deedes, fas-
ting, afflictions, and the lyke.

Whereupon said *Probus*, commeth
this false concept of theirs?

It commeth said *Alphonso*, firste by
reason the deuill tempteth them, and
withall, the taist and appetite of their
soule, is distempered and corrupted,
as I toulde you yester night, in the
fourth instruction, by the example of
the sick man, that by reason of his in-
fected taist, desireth hurtfull meates,
and taketh loath with wholesom.

What remedie haue we against this
noysom impediment said *Probus*?

We must prouyde first said *Alphon-
so*, that our corrupt appetite be cured,
as I said in the fourth instructiō: which
done, they that feele this couldnes, &

haue this wrong estimation, shall in-
continent perceiue, all other wo-kes,
how worthy & meruelous soeuer they
seme, to be verie abiect & base, in re-
specte of this loue, as S. Paule tea-
cheth vs. And our *Sauour* him self,
beinge the eternall wido n of God,
(which can not erre or deceiue vs)
haith cholen & commaunded the same
about all thinges which may be done
in heauen or earth. A reason hereof
you may haue also, if you consider that
albeit our free will & the actes there-
of (which I toulde you before in the
fourth instruction, to be of greatest
dignitie in vs) be of them selues, litle
worth or of small commoditie: Yet
may we make them of inestimable dig-
nitie & valew, if we vnite our will &
most strongly fasten it, to the will of
God, which is of an infinite excellen-
cy, in such manner ioyning ours vnto
his, that it be not carried to any other
thinge, but what his blessed will de-
sireth. For then the acte & desire of
our infirme & base free will, groweth
to be of infinite valewe and dignitie,

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when (forlaking our selues) we take the desire of that infinite will which is God, who incessantly willeth, lo- ueth, & ioyeth, for the infinite good & worthines he haith.

Why requyreth God said *Probus*, that we shoulde desire loue & ioye in this sort: as he euer doth?

He would haue vs doe it said *Alphonso*, first for that his loue & goodnes to vs, would haue our abiect free will, aduanced to so greate nobilitie & honour, as to haue an act of infinite and diuine valew. Againe, because (seing he haith created vs to so great a good as to enioy him self) it is iuste that we yelde him this seruice at least as to occupye our selues all the tyme of our mortall lyfe, in louing him and ioying for his good & glorye, as we see faithfull seruantes & lourge, exceedingly to reioyce, for the goodes & honour their Lordes gett. Thindlye, that heare on earth we may occupye our selues, & begin that worke wherein our eternall glory and beatytude in heauen, cheisly must consist. For gods

holye

holye Sain&tes, clearly behouldinge his nature & essence; are replenished with an infinite knowledge, to iudge what goodnes & glorie his Maestie is worthy of: & also with an infinite desire and loue, that he possesse the same. Which burning desire & loue of theirs, when (behoudinge God) they see it fulfilled in more perfecte sorte then they can wishe, imagine, or comprehend, they are rauished with vnspeakable ioyes & gladnes.

The happye Sainctes in heauen, haue the manifest vision & perfect fruition of all his goodnes, & therefore their knowledg, loue, & ioy, is perfect. We sinfull wormes on earthe by the lighte of our catholicke faith (though obscurelye, yet moste certainlye & firmlye) beleue the same, which they behoulde. And therefore God will, that we occupy our powers as much as we can, in the same loue, desire & ioy, of the infinite goodnes & glory of our Lorde. For the more we loue him, & ioye in his goodnes here on earth: the more perfecte and

greater, shall oure loue & ioyes be in heauen.

I conceiue all this said *Probus*, but many without doubt, haue obteyned the perfecte loue of God requyred in this lyfe, withoute all this adoe, or knowledg of this way you haue taught me.

Many haue indeede said *Alph n/s*, leued God perfectly, before this way was either known to me, or taught in this manner, by any that I haue hard: but surely the ordinary way to get it, kaithe bene this in substance. For it is gathered owt of the holy Scriptures, accordinge to the declaration of the holye Doctoures, which haue written of this matter.

Many haue thought & thinke still that they haue gotten it verie easelye without these reasons & meanes, but comonly they fayled of it, & gott but the weake & imperfecte loue which I spake of before.

If you thinke good we will now passe to the loue of oure neighbours.

Doe so I pray you said *Probus*.

OF THE LOVE OF OVR
Neighbour.

AS the loue of God said *Alphonso*,
 requyred before it, all the ex-
 ercyfes and confiderations we
 fpake of: fo the loue of our neighbour
 & of our felues, requyred before the
 the loue of god. For it is neceffary that
 thefe two loues procede from the loue
 of god, otherwyfe they can not be
 good or well ordered. You muſte
 know then that he which deſireth to
 ferue & pleaſe God: muſt mark and
 obſerue two things. The firſt is, what
 God would haue him to doe: The ſe-
 conde, in what manner he would haue
 it done. For he ſhoulde haue ſmall
 thanke, or rewarde with God, that
 ſhould doe his commaundemente, if
 he did it not in the manner he com-
 maunded it. He haith bidden vs to
 loue one an other ſaying, *This is my*
precept, that you loue one an other: and
 with this, in what ſorte alſo we ſhould
 doe it ſayinge, *as I haue loued you.*

He then that doth the firſte, ſhall

not haue the high reward due to that loue, except alio he doe the seconde.

New therefore to knowe how we ought one to loue an other; we must consider how our Lord loued vs.

First by many waies & meanes, he drew & induced vs to the loue of god: Then he taught vs by his owne example, to suffer patiently, all the aduersities of this world, neuer slackening the raynes to vaine delights, aboue that which might be necessary to the sustentation of his body. Then he dyed for vs, that we might haue thereby vertues, grace, & glorye. In this kind of loue he meruelously exceeded, & was a most vehemente enemye to all wayne loue which now passeth among vs, & is ordinarily verie corrupt & infectious to our soules, created to be the temples of God. Accordinge to this example therefore of our Lorde, we ought to frame our Loue towards our neighboures, casting away all vanities, which are accustomed to mixe them selues with our loue, as to be much affected to some persons, for that

LOVE OF OVR NEIGHBOVRE.

we see them vertuous & deuout, and in their conuersation, to be mylde, graccous, & amiable: In the loue of whom often good menns hartes, are taken captyue, finding greife, disquietnes & trouble of mynde, to be without them, or not to talke with them or not to be mutually beloued & esteemed of them: All which kinde of affection & loue is vaine and hurtfull to the seruantes of God.

Me think said *Probus*, we mighte well loue others in this sorte, becaule we see them goddes seruants; cheitly if we doe it for God.

If your frend said *Alphonso*, had a seruant, the loue of whom, shoulde so hould captiue your hart, & so greatly increase, that it more delighted you, to conuerse and talke with him, then with your frende: were it not manifest that now you leue not the seruant for your frende, but because his conuersation & nature is sweete & gratefull to you. For though your leue towards that seruant, began for your frendes sake, yet now it is become inordinate

and excessiue & more for your owne pleasure & delight yec take in the seruant, then wholly for respect of your friend: Euen thus we may speake of that loue you rehearsed. It is playne mockerie to say it is loue of our neighbour purely for god, notwithstanding there be perhaps some part of spirituall loue therewith. But he that is truly & wholly addicted to God, taketh noe parte from him, but geueth him all, occupying & bestowing his wholl affection on him, or in some thing, that is wholly ordered or directed to him, as such vaine loue can not be, beinge more for some thing in a creature, then for God.

Our loue shou'd be towards all the seruants of our Father, aswell our enemies as frendes, with so great affection as may proceede, from the loue we haue to him, that all other affections sett asyde, onelye that may haue place which we owe vnto God.

To auoyde & callye of all which superfluous affections, those things may helpe, which I toulde you of before,

LOVE OF OVR NEIGHBOVR.

speakinge of the naturall affection of ioy, & of the vse of our will.

How then said *Probus*, shoulde we loue our neighbour?

Our loue to them, said *Alphonso*, shoulde springe altogether from the loue of God, that (considering they are so highly beloued of him, that he would yeld him self to death for them when yet they were his enemies) we shoulde loue them all so much, as to help them in all that is good & needfull for their bodies & soules, lyke as we are wonte loue them that muche delight vs: Yea & this we should do, though their conuersation weare molestfull & odious vnto vs, entreatinge them curteously, & prouiding for their necessities, as for them which are tenderly beloued of our heavenly Lorde & Father, who willeth & commaundeth vs so to doe. All this we ought to doe, with as seruente a will as we can, for gratifying, pleasing, & obeyinge our Lorde, how iniurious & noysome soeuer they be vnto vs.

It is verie harde said *Probus*, for to

beare

beare such tender affection to our enemies, as we may doe to our friends & benefactoures.

Our corrupt natures said *Alphonso*, finde difficultie to loue our enemies, but the children of God must not measure nor order their actions, by the inclination & motions of their corrupte affections, but by the rule of gods holy will and commaundment. And a resolute will of seruing God, maketh them noe lesse firme & constante in louing him, whom their owne inordinate affections would hate, then him whom by the aboundance of benefites & good turnes, they are inclyned to loue.

Yet with all this you muste know, that albeit our loue ought to be in this sort equally to euery one: yet ought we first to shew it in good effects and benefites, towards them that are vertuous, & them we are behoulden vnto. For gods will is, that our charitie be orderly disposed, preferringe in their good benefites, euery one, according as we are diuersly bound vn-

to them.

God haith also said *Probus*, commaunded vs to loue our neighbour, as we loue our selues, which is an other manner of louinge them, then as our Sauour loued vs.

He haith commaunded so indeede said *Alphonso*, but this manner & the other, are all one in effect & substance if they be rightly vnderstoode. For the loue which we shoulde haue to our selues, ought to be the same, and in the same manner, as our Sauour loued vs. We will therefore if it please you goe forward, & declare in what sort we are to loue our selues.

Doe so I pray you said *Probus*, for it can not but be a pleasant hearinge, & without all perill of offending any, euery one being desirous, to loue him self as much as may be.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR
SELVES.

OUr naturall inclination said *Alphonso*, to the loue of our selues, is so great & vchemente, that God haith not geuen vs any commaundement thereof, yet by the blyndnes & corruption of sinn, we haue in most part lost our iudgment & knowledge, how we ought to doe it.

He therefore that would truly loue himself, must obserue three things.

First that by all meanes he procure any thing wheareby he knoweth any good may come to himself.

Secondly that he flee and auoyde, whatsoeuer may bring him damage or euill.

Thirdly that he refuse not to offer & yelde him self to any difficulties for obteyninge his owne good.

Our naturall reason and the lighte of our Catholick faith, sufficientlye teach vs, which be true goodes & euills, & which be apparent & decentfull. And we must be verie circumspect

spect & diligent that we erre not, in discerning these, or follow not the unreasonable inclinations & appetites of our owne sensualitye, takinge that for good, which indeede is hurtfull, or fleeing that as euill, which in truthe is our good.

Now he that would enrich him self with good thinges, must know, that in euery good he desirethe, or may obteyne, two thinges are to be considered. One is, the good that may come to him self, by that thing. The other is, that it is godds will & desire, that he haue that thing. Of these two he ought litle or noe whitt, to esteeme the benefite or good that may happen to him self of the thing he desireth or doth as it is his owne: In respecte of the seconde, that it is the seruice of God, & the fulfilling of his holy will as I coulde you before in the fifth instruction, speaking of the end of all our actions & desires.

Our Lord haith geuen vs a preceous ornament or Iewell, where-with we may exceedingly enriche our selues

at any tyme, that is our appetite and will, the which we (as it were) gilde with coper or tinne, when we desyre & loue any thing for our owne good & benefite : And againe, we adorne & bewtify it with diuine goulde, whē (forgeating our selues) we desire and loue any good thing, onely for pleasing & seruinge our Lorde, & fulfilling his will. For the more we forgeat our selues, & haue care of godds honour & glorie, the more care haith the God ouer vs againe to enriche vs with all goodnes. Wherefore he that spiritually loueth him self, must euer (as worldly men doe) study how to make better, all his goodes & substance whē he knoweth the way how it may easily be done. What more is to be said of this poynt, I referre you to our conference of the hatred of our selues.

For the seconde also, which is the fleeing of all euill : I nede to say noe more, but he that truly loueth him self must esteeme nothing euill or hurtfull to him, & so flee it, but onely sinne & the occasions thereof.

Now

LOVE OF OVR SELVES.

Now for the thirde, which is to offer himself to any difficultie or daungers for getting his own good: I must admonish him diligently to exercise himself in the thinges that I haue said before, but principally, in the hatred of him self, in humilitie, in patience, and in the foure naturall affections or passions of his soule.

Is there then nomore necessary said *Probus*, for obteyninge this true loue of our selues?

One thinge more said *Alphonso*, is to be obserued and practised diligently, and that is. It hapneth dailye, that we doe or say something, otherwyse then we should haue done or becometh vs, for which they that see or heare, (knowing our defect or imperfection) may think the worse of vs, & the lesse esteeme vs. In which case we must consider, first the confusion that foloweth vs thereby. In this confusion we must not comfort or animate our selues, in thinking that others perhaps regarded not what we did or said, or that perhaps they haue forgotten it,

or

or that it should not tröub'e vs, because other men fall often into the like defects: This I say we should not doe, but with great loue embrace that confusion, & think that others marked vs verie well, & account worse of vs, & worthily contenne vs as vnprofitable & vnperfect men. For in doing thus, we make a vehement acte of patience and humilitie, and shortly produce, most excellent habitts of them, and finally, doe great seruice to God, if we refer it to him.

The other thing we are to consider in such cases, is the euill example we geue thereby, and the dishonoure or lesse glory to God. For this therefore the seruant of God, must produce an acte of sorow, for that he haith bene by that speech or fact, perhaps some occasion of euill, or lesse seruiceable to his Lorde, then he might or shoulde haue bene, and thus shall he reape commodity both on the one, and the other.

This is all I haue to say of the loue of our selues, vnlesse you be vn satisfi-

ed in some thing.

I am verie well sarisfied in all you haue spoken said *Probus*, & I vetelye thinke, that whosoever would frame him self to serue God in this sorte you haue toulde me, should not onely increase exceedingly his owne meritt & glory in heauen: but moreouer leade a most ioyfull & sweete lyfe in earth.

He should noe doubt finde much comfort, ioye, & sweetenes said *Alphonso*, seruing God in this sorte, but he muste beware, he reste not in this sweetenes, nor serue God for it, because God geueth it not for that ende, but that by it we may come to take de'ight & ioye, in the consideration of that good, glorye, & dominion, which God possesseth, and that with great courage, we laude & prayse him.

What is our prayeing of God said *Probus*?

All prayse of God said *Alphonso*, is none other thing in vs, then a iove that we haue, to manifeste and make knowne to all persons, the wonderfull woorkes & inestimable goodnes of our

Lorde, in whom his seruants ought to delight & ioye, as worldly men doe, when they heare their deare frendes, or them selues praised.

Now let vs ende with thanks geuing to God for his giftes and goodnes.

Tell me this also said *Probus*, how shall I geue thanks to God?

OF THANKES GEIVING.

THanksgeuing to God, said *Alphonso*, is nothing els but an internall acte of the soule, whereby he that haith receiued a gift or benefite from God, first recogniseth him to be an infinite God & Lorde, from whom floweth all good in heauen & earth, and then ioyeth, not because he is more enryched thereby, but for the glory & goodnes of his Lord, and for that he seeth him self by that gifte, more abled to loue & serue him.

Is there nothinge besides this said *Probus*, necessary in yeldinge thanks to God?

Besides these actes of our vnderstanding & will said *Alphonso*, godds seruant ought vpon receipt of any benefite, to offer vnto God all he is, abasinge & annihilating him self in his owne conceipt & will, that so he may wholly in body & soule, be deuoted into godds seruice, producing at that tyme greate actes of ioye, for the infinite power & goodnes of god, from which that benefite came. For he that would be accounted gratefull, ought to requyte his benefactour with another thinge of as great or greater value & worth, then that was, which he receiued of him before.

And seing we haue receiued of god all we haue: whatsoeuer we yelde to his seruice, is verie small to requyte, yea, the leaste of his benefites. We ought therefore at the least, to render him thanks for them, in the manner I haue said, & this with as much loue and force, as possibly we may.

And not onely to doe this, for the benefites bestowed on our selues, but also for the giftes & graces geuen to

all his Sainets, to our frendes, to our
 enemies, and all his creatures in hea-
 ven & earthe. For in so doinge, we
 make (in a straunge and meruelous
 sorte) the goodes of all godds crea-
 tures, our owne, & without regarde
 of our owne commoditie, we excee-
 dingly increase the same.

Now is it tyme, you were traueling.
 I will bring you into your way againe.

I thank you Father said *Probus*.
 And beinge come to the way, they
 embraced eche other and departed;
Alphonso to his solitary cell, & *Pro-
 bus* towarde Ierusalem.

Deo gratias.

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Faultes escaped in the printing

*Fol. 9 pag. 1 lin. 4 Helped. reads,
euer helped.*

*Fol. 14 pag. 2 lin. 2 greise, reads,
serow & gresse.*

*Fol. 16 pag. 1 lin. 11 For god. reads
for none other ende but onely for,*

*Fol. 34 pag. 2. lin. 27 vnfeaned,
reads, ready & vnfeaned.*

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*Fol. 52 pag. 1 lin. 7 God is, reads
our Lorde is.*

*Fol. 94 pag. 2 lin. 20 good & glorie,
reads, infinite good.*